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CHRISTIANITY IN THE MODERN WORLD

By the Rev.
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TO DAVID, ELIZABETH
AND HELEN
CAIRNS

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PREFACE

THE greater part of the following volume has already been published in the form of articles in the *Contemporary Review*. To the Editor of that Review I am much indebted for his kind encouragement, and his courteous permission to reprint these studies in consecutive form. The second chapter has not before been printed, and there are changes and additions throughout the rest of the volume. I desire to express here my deep sense of obligation to my friends, the Rev. Dr. Oman, Alnwick, the Rev. Dr. Maclagan, Swatow, the Rev. Joseph Leckie, Cupar, and the Rev. Professor Kennedy, Knox College, Toronto, for many criticisms and suggestions towards the development of the argument; and to my colleague and friend, the

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Rev. W. Wilson, Ayton, for much care bestowed upon the revision of proofs.

Among the many writers upon the subjects treated of in these pages by whom I have been helped, I should like specially to mention two—the Very Rev. Principal Fairbairn, Mansfield College, Oxford, to whose masterly surveys of the course of Modern Theology I am deeply indebted, and Mr. Thomas Kirkup, from whom, of all modern authorities upon the Social Question, I have learned most.

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INTRODUCTION

WHEN the religious history of the nineteenth century comes to be fully understood, it will probably be found that at no period in all the long story of Christianity has the Christian Faith been subjected to so great an intellectual strain. Never has it been harder for an educated man to believe that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself," save, perhaps, in the heroic days of the Founder and His Apostles. The age of the first Apologists, in some respects, presents the closest parallel. In those days the conflict was with Hellenism, the intellectual medium created by the great thinkers of Greece, the reaction of which upon Christian faith gave us the massive system of Catholic Dogma, in whose shadow the Church for many centuries lived a life untroubled by intellectual doubt. The

only other epoch which can compare with the present in the respect above indicated is that of the *Aufklärung* of the eighteenth century. But, brilliant and confident as was the Rationalism of the eighteenth century, it cannot compare for depth and strength with the negative thinking of the nineteenth, and is to be viewed rather as the precursor of the graver and more formidable movement that is still running its course. How formidable that movement has been it will be part of the endeavour of the following pages to show. The attack has come from many quarters, from the new Science, the new Philosophy, and the new Criticism—each of which had already earned the right to the respect and gratitude of men from its achievements in other spheres ; and thus Christian men have had to live their weekday life in a world of industry and culture shaped and dominated by intellectual forces apparently hostile to their deepest faith.

" In our modern world," says Professor Herrman, " Christianity is an alien," and, startling as is the expression, it is, in many respects, true.

How intense has been the strain within Protestant Christianity the biographies of the thinking men and women who have lived through the period bear abounding and pathetic testimony. Carlyle, George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, Darwin and Ruskin—the story of each of these, in its own way, bears testimony to the gravity of the spiritual crisis, and the sorrows and dangers of a life

> Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born,

In others the same crisis of faith has mirrored itself after a different fashion in the way of reaction; but Newman and Pusey indicate its gravity as certainly as do those already mentioned. Some few saints among them have lived in higher and less troubled regions, but the great majority among our leaders of thought have come halting and scarred to their journey's end.

The crisis which appears in such representative experiences has been felt also in the common life of the Church. It is manifest in the still growing religious indifference of the working classes; its shadow falls upon the preacher; its influence

may be noted everywhere in popular literature and the Press. All thoughtful and believing men feel it to be one of the most formidable signs of the times. They cannot help asking what this sinister movement means, and to what it is tending. The earnest Evangelical, such as Spurgeon, has the same feeling towards it as had Pusey and Newman. To minds of a certain type the whole movement is evil, they feel towards it as Voltaire felt towards "the Infamous." The Church has got upon the "down grade," and must be brought back to the old track, if it is not to go crashing down in ruin

Is this really a true explanation of the present situation? I do not believe that it is. I believe that a careful study of the conditions which have produced the current unsettlement of belief rather compels the conclusion that this great and apparently sinister movement of thought was inevitable, and that its necessity was not wholly or even mainly due to human weakness or sin, but that it lay in the very nature of the case. But if this can be established, it will follow for all religious

minds that this movement has been part of the great counsel of God. I believe this to be true, and therefore that the outlook for Christianity at the present moment is far grander than is commonly believed, and that what we are really witnessing is the slow coming to life of a new and nobler world. I shall endeavour in the following pages to prove that this is the case, and in doing so shall, first, briefly enumerate the main causes which have produced the present anarchy of belief; I shall then draw attention to the positive synthesis of Christian belief which is emerging from the long analysis of the past century; and I shall, finally, seek to show the incalculable value of this positive result for the world at its present stage of development.

THE MODERN PRAEPARATIO EVANGELICA

Chapter I

THE MODERN PRAEPARATIO EVANGELICA

THE chief intellectual solvents which have been acting upon the traditional versions of Christianity during the last century may be grouped in three classes—the Scientific, the Philosophical, and the Critical.

(1) Foremost among these we must place the rise of Physical Science.

In our modern world we all live more or less in the light—and in the shadow—of Physical Science. The story of the inductive sciences—Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Electricity and Biology—is so well known that we need not recount it. Chapter after chapter the great Book of Nature has been interpreted to us as the scientific method has been perfected, and applied, first to the simpler, and then to the more complex phenomena of the natural world. No one to-day questions the solidity or the permanence of the great structure of knowledge, whose foundations took so long to lay, but whose upper courses have arisen with such astonishing rapidity. Our whole modern

world of industry and commerce rests upon the scientific view of nature. This view forms the basis of the entire technique of production and exchange. Without it the "great industry" of our days would be impossible. All mechanical inventions, all modern navigation and agriculture depend upon its truth, and upon the thoroughness, expertness, industry and courage with which men apply its principles to the practical problems before them. All medical and sanitary science presupposes its truth. It is, in fact, part of the mental world in which we live and move and have our being.

But an essential part of the scientific view of the world is the idea of Natural Law. The principle that Nature is uniform in her methods; that all her parts are united in one great system of causes and effects, or, at least, of antecedents and consequents; that, to put the matter anthropomorphically, she is under a Reign of Law, is postulated by all men of Science, and is accepted as axiomatic by the culture of our day. The prestige of Science at the present time is enormous. The wonder and dazzle of her theoretical achievements are still in the world's eyes, the thunder of her practical triumphs is in its ears. Legions of her specialists, working in all departments of pure and technical knowledge, diffuse her ideas through the masses, and so the edu-

cated world of to-day is permeated through and through by her principles, and tends to read all things in heaven and earth through them, just as an imaginative child sees all the real world around it in the light of some new story-book of absorbing interest.

Now, that the scientific view of nature is quite in harmony with the religious interpretation of the world may be perfectly true. Christian thinkers may be able to show that their convictions as to human freedom, the power of prayer, the individualizing providence of God, and the new creation in Christ Jesus, are consonant with belief in Natural Law. But what we have to remember is that these convictions grew up at the first in a very different intellectual medium from that in which they must live to-day. The creative and dogmatic ages of Christianity knew little of the Uniformity of Nature, and hence the forms in which Christian thought expressed these religious convictions necessarily became inadequate as soon as Science rose to its full power. Hence arose an irrepressible conflict, in which superstition and an unreasoning conservatism on the side of Theology, and narrowness and revolutionary bigotry on the side of Science, embittered and aggravated the real difficulties which face us when we try to harmonize the Religious and the Scientific views of the world.

But while human prejudice and folly have thus entangled the controversy, the undeniable fact is that such a controversy was historically inevitable in any case, and therefore must have formed part of the Divine Purpose. No one who believes in God can doubt that it was His Hand which opened this new volume of His Wisdom, and set His children the arduous task of reading the new knowledge into the old, and the old into the new. If we believe in His Providence in so far as the great secular events of history are concerned, it is impossible to exclude the rise of Science from the same great Counsel as is recognized in the rise and fall of empires. If we grant this, we must grant also that that same Divine Providence intended the collision between the older and the newer views of the world, with the resulting uncertainty of belief. But the Divine Providence can never conflict with the Divine Grace, and so we who believe in the living God must conclude that beyond the present conflicts there lies some great and enduring gain.

(2) The second intellectual solvent of traditional Theology has been found in Philosophy.

To all intents, and for all the purposes of a brief review such as this, it will be enough to assume that modern Philosophy still rests upon the work of Kant. The best expositors of Kant

are agreed that his motive in elaborating the great fabric of the Transcendental Philosophy was to safeguard the interests of human freedom in the presence of the intimidating might of Nature. Although he lived before the time of the greatest scientific triumphs, Kant clearly discerned the course which inductive thought was taking. He was thoroughly abreast of the Science of his day, and was himself a scientific discoverer of no mean order. He plainly foresaw what would be the results of the rise of the modern conception of Nature on the moral and spiritual life of man. His early Puritan training had impressed indelibly upon him the Christian ideas of the Value of the Soul, the Supremacy of Duty, and the Worth of Personality, and so he bent all the power of his extraordinary intelligence to the solution of the problem. "The starry heavens above," amazing him on the wide Baltic levels, as they amazed the Chaldean sages on the huge Babylonian plain, by the splendour and order of their courses; "the moral law within," the awful voice speaking to his inmost soul as to a freeman and not to a slave—could these awful voices, the highest and grandest that he knew, be in conflict, the one with the other? Incredible!

Yet how reconcile the difference? Current Philosophy afforded no adequate solution. Nothing less, Kant believed, was at stake than the

spiritual life of Humanity; and so he undertook and carried through the rigorous analysis of the three great Critiques, an analysis which was at once felt to have opened a new epoch in the history of human thought. The idea that Kant was primarily a destroyer, that his analysis of knowledge was primarily in the sceptical interest, is wholly mistaken. His aim was essentially positive; it was the vindication of the rights of the soul of man in presence of the apparent tyranny of Nature. Incidentally, it is true, he was a great destroyer. He smote the dogmatisms of his day as with the hammer of Thor. No doubt his iconoclastic zeal ran to extremes; but, none the less, his analysis of knowledge rendered necessary a new and deeper investigation into the old dogmatic ideas, while his positive results stand to-day in the front rank for Christian thought. Since his days Philosophy has worked mainly along the lines which he has laid down. Great systems have been reared on his foundations; but idealist and agnostic alike own his priority, and no scheme of thought can be secure of a hearing to-day that takes no account of the Critical Philosophy.

Here, again, it must be said that, given the rise of Science with its conception of the Reign of Law, and given the maintenance of the Christian estimate of the value of the soul, that critical analysis

was inevitable, and therefore the Christian must regard it, with all its logical consequences, as "Providential." It is as certain as anything can be that in view of the new Science, with its intimidating discoveries, the old philosophies had become inadequate for the vindication of human freedom, and that unless the Christian idea of personality was to vanish from Philosophy, a deeper analysis of the very nature of thought had to be undertaken. If it had not been undertaken by Kant, it would have had to be done by some one else, or by a school, or by a generation, instead of by one man.

(3) The only other cause of the religious uncertainty which we are considering that need be adverted to here is the rise of the Science of Biblical Criticism.

This critical movement is, broadly regarded, simply a phase of the great Historical revival of the nineteenth century, which, as so competent a judge as Lord Acton declares, was a deeper and more serious movement than the Renaissance itself. That Historical Movement, as the same writer points out, originated in the actions and reactions of thought created by the mightiest event of modern secular history—the French Revolution. That revolution, as we know, had been long prepared for by the great French critics of the eighteenth century. They felt that a won-

derful new world was coming slowly to the birth, "the world of Watt and Lavoisier," the world of the Industrial Revolution and of modern Science. They felt instinctively that the danger was great, that the weight of religious conservatism and antiquated absolutism in Church and State would smother that new world at its birth, and so they toiled with furious energy to "crush the Infamous." They were filled with hatred of the dominant past. It stood to them for superstition and tyranny, and they enlisted all the force of their genius and eloquence and learning to destroy it. We know that they succeeded only too well. The hurricane broke, and when calm came once more, there came with it the great Romantic reaction, with its rehabilitation of Mediaevalism, its passion for the past, its worship of order and authority, its detestation of the Revolution and all its works. This movement in Germany found one of its expressions in a reawakening of Historical Science. It was countered in France by another Historical School, which, treating the Revolution as itself one of the mightiest events of history, sought to explain and justify it by more searching investigation of the conditions which produced it; and out of the conflict between these two tendencies a new epoch in history began. All this, it can now be seen, was historically inevitable; its causes were deep-seated; it was part of the

normal advance of human knowledge, and it has abundantly justified itself, as Science has done, by its practical results.

But it was also inevitable that the methods which the great historians were applying with such brilliant results to the histories and early literatures of Greece and Rome should be applied also to the sacred writings and the sacred history; certain at least in lands in which the principles of the Reformation had reached their full development. That attack was not long delayed. The attack came first in Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, from the more radical section of the Hegelian party, the same left wing which later gave Marx and Lassalle to the Social Revolution; and it was reinforced with greater learning and superior historical acumen by the famous school of Tübingen. In this formidable attack the three movements above enumerated, the Scientific, the Philosophical, and the Historical, came together in one great ocean breaker. The Scientific antipathy to anything that claimed to be inexplicable in terms of law, and the Philosophical antipathy to anything that could not be brought within the dialectic evolution of the Idea, coalesced with the new Critical temper, in making the most formidable intellectual attack on the foundations of Christian faith that history has ever known. The representatives of these views saw that the real heart

of the whole traditional position was the historical Personality of Christ, and that if they could explain that Personality in terms of ordinary, or even exceptional humanity, the whole dogmatic and ecclesiastical construction would in time disappear, and leave room for the victory of what they believed to be Reason and Progress. The genius, the learning, and the persistence of this attack form an impressive spectacle, even for those who believe it to have been radically mistaken. It was an incomparably graver matter than the attack of the *Aufklärung*, for it represented an altogether deeper and richer view of life than the Deists and Rationalists had known.

Face to face with this new development, Protestant theology found itself, for the time, gravely embarrassed. The long-extended battle front of the orthodox scholastic theology and apologetics, which had been drawn up in view of quite other conditions, was plainly no longer suited to the new circumstances. Strauss's challenge raised the central question, "Who was Jesus of Nazareth?" after quite a new fashion. No doubt criticism and theology alike had long been making towards this result, but that prolonged process had now reached its climax. The battle had at last reached its agony round the standard. To any one who knows anything of the controversy which has been briefly outlined above, it

must be plain that Protestant theology had no alternative, save the course which it now took. It was inevitable that its main interest should be diverted from the circumference of doctrine to its centre; inevitable that its scholars should toil at this new theme of the historical Personality of Jesus; and that its thinkers should labour to work out the new material that its scholars had won; inevitable, too, that the entire New Testament revelation should in time be seen in a new perspective.

This, too, is, therefore, part of the great Providential movement which has been outlined above. The movement which was brought to a climax by Strauss and the men of Tübingen has been prolonged for more than half a century, and Christian scholarship in all the more progressive countries has responded to the challenge. Never has a fiercer light of investigation beaten upon any tract of human history than upon the little handsbreadth of time that held the human life of our Lord. The Gospels have been sifted line by line by the textual critic, the "higher critic," and the commentator. Countless monographs have been written on the different phases of the life of the period, the praxis of Scribe and Pharisee, the Apocalyptic literature of Judaism, the social and political life of the people. Their inscriptions have been deciphered, their coinage

counted, their chronology revised. The theodolite and measuring chain of the surveyor have travelled through the length and breadth of the Holy Land ; the pickaxe and shovel have turned up its buried past, the artist has spent long years in its cities and villages, its deserts and its fertile vales. Hundreds of scholars and men of action have lived and laboured, happy if they could cast the least ray of light on the great central problem of the life of the Lord. Many treatises have been written on that life, and many are still flowing from the great publishing houses of Berlin, London, Paris, and New York. A whole library of literature has already grown up around this theme, nor is there any sign of abatement of the interest. The work of investigation has by no means been completed, nor can we yet speak of anything more than an approach to agreement on many of the more important points. None the less it is true that this immense labour has not been wasted. The net effect of the whole movement is that Christendom has won a spiritual result of immense value. The historic Personality of Jesus has risen upon the consciousness of the Church with the force almost of a new revelation, the ultimate results of which still lie far in the future. It is literally true, that this century is face to face with that Great Figure as no century has been

since the first. This new discovery has come gradually. It has required the labours of sixty years. It has come like a gradual dawn rather than a tropical sunrise. It is the great positive result of the whole complex movement which has been described, and, in the judgment of the present writer, it far more than compensates for the apparent losses.

Now that positive result has already had far-reaching consequences in two directions : it has profoundly impressed the popular consciousness, and it is exerting a great influence also upon scientific theology.

(*a*) The effect on the popular consciousness.

The new light upon the human life of Jesus, which has been won by the labours of three generations of scholars, has not remained a private possession of academic circles. By a multitude of agencies, through Christian preaching and instruction, through popular lives of Jesus, written alike from the believing and the unbelieving standpoints, and through literature generally, it has reached the masses, and has obviously created a deep impression upon them. What is the meaning of that new spirit of reverence for Jesus which has fallen upon all the more earnest minds of our day who are outside the pale of the Christian communion, a reverence which is in such singular contrast with the temper of the older unbelief ;

of the distinction which is everywhere drawn among them between the Churches and Christ, and between the Christ of dogma and the Jesus of history; of the new interest in all that relates to the personal life of our Lord, which is the modern analogue of that Messianic interest which drew men to Him in the days of the "Galilean spring"? Popular literature bears abounding witness to that awakening of interest. Imaginative writers of the most diverse calibre, from Tolstoy downward, have availed themselves of it, and their works have been translated into nearly all the European languages; or, within the English-speaking world, have circulated by the hundred thousand, or, as is the case with Mr. Sheldon's writings, by the million.

In view of what will be said later, of the bearing of this new prominence of the Jesus of history on the missionary and economic problems of our day, I shall content myself with selecting two out of many illustrative quotations that might be given. I shall take, first, the well-known saying of Keshub Chunder Sen, one of the most remarkable and representative figures of modern times.

"If you wish to secure that allegiance and attachment of India, it must be through spiritual influence and moral suasion. And such indeed has been the case in India. You cannot deny that your hearts have been touched, conquered, and

subjugated by a superior power. That power, need I tell you, is Christ. It is Christ who rules British India, and not the British Government. England sent out a tremendous moral power in the life and character of the mighty prophet, to conquer and to hold this vast empire." That is the testimony of a man nurtured in hereditary heathendom.

Take now what Max Göhre in his remarkable volume, *Drei Monate Fabrik-Arbeiter*, tells us of the inner thought of that formidable new democracy that is growing up in modern Germany, alienated not only from the present social order, but from all conventional religious belief and communion. After drawing the darkest picture of the lapse from all definite Christian belief of the workmen in the Chemnitz factory in which he laboured, he says : " One thing only has remained in all of them—esteem and reverence for Jesus Christ. Even the most outspoken Social Democrat and hater of faith has that ; yes, assuredly, he has it in greater measure than many a man not devoted to the Social Democratic propaganda." He goes on to say that this Jesus is to them not the Christ of theology, but of history, a noble dreamer who sought to effect by religious means the bringing in of that golden world age which can only be accomplished by economic revolution. His method, they think, was impracticable.

"But," he concludes, "they all hold themselves in thoughtful silence before this great Personality."

Surely this temper of the non-Christian world opens up to the Church one of her greatest opportunities. But it will be said, "granting all this to be true, granting that this new sense of the moral greatness of Jesus Christ is the direct result of the modern movement, we have, none the less, lost more than we have gained. The Christ in Whom the ancient Church believed, the Christ, by faith in Whom all the great deeds of her history have been achieved, was very God of very God: the Jesus who emerges from the mists of to-day is a Man. The apparition in whom men are interested is human, not Divine. Consequently, Max Göhre's Social Democrats rightly regard Him as a Dreamer, 'a beautiful but ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain.' This is not faith." No, it is not yet faith; but if the Church uses her opportunity aright, it is the temper out of which faith may be born anew. It is her opportunity. Will she avail herself of it? Will she have the intuition to discern that the situation is unprecedented, and in that unprecedented situation will she have the further intuition to follow the right path? If I am right, that path has already been marked out for her, and Christian scholarship is already preparing the road.

(b) This brings us to consider, next, the effect of the modern movement on Scientific Theology.

The new prominence given to the historic Personality of Jesus Christ has led inevitably to a new and more thorough examination of the circle of spiritual Ideas in which He lived and moved and had His being. The freshest and most interesting work in the sphere of New Testament theology is probably at present being done in investigating the teaching of Jesus, and in inquiring into the relations in which it stands, on the one hand, to the current ideas of Judaism, and, on the other, to the Apostolic developments.

It will in the long run, I believe, be found impossible to maintain supreme reverence for the character of Jesus, and to reject the truth of His ideas. The character is simply the ideas translated into temper and conduct. If the ideas are illusory, then the character is not in accordance with the nature of things, and in such a case it is not what we ought to imitate or admire. All such admiration is simply sentimentality; it is not ethical, and it stands in the way of human progress. But if we cannot face this, if we feel, in spite of ourselves, awe and veneration for the character of Jesus, we must, sooner or later, go on to faith in the ideas. This, as I read the matter, indicates the true line for the Church to follow with the people to-day, if she would transmute

the current admiration of Jesus into her own faith that He is the Son of God.

But the adoption of such a line of argument in the modern Christian Apologia has important consequences in the sphere of Theology. If we regard the Character of Christ as the central evidence for the truth of Christianity, we are led by a natural and inevitable process of thought to regard the Mind of Christ as the central norm for Theology. The connexion between Character and Belief is, in fact, of the closest kind. This is a truth which has been in our days obscured by the confusion between Belief and Dogma. Our age has become familiar with the spectacle of men who have been unable to accept Dogmatic Christianity, but whose lives have, none the less, been of a lofty moral type. Some of the most Christian teachings of our age have, in fact, come from men who have rejected the Creeds. Hence there has arisen the popular idea to which Tennyson gave utterance in the earlier part of last century, when the new leaven was beginning to work in the England of his day—

> There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds.

But there is a deep distinction between elemental religious beliefs and the formulation of these in dogma. Between such primordial

religious convictions and conduct there is the closest reciprocal connexion. Our habitual conduct conditions their rise and growth within us, and in turn they powerfully influence our conduct. Kant had this principle in his mind when he asserted "God, Freedom, and Immortality" as the "postulates of the Practical Reason." The whole drift of latter day Philosophy, moreover, is in the direction of emphasizing the place of Will as a creative force not only in religion, but also in the sphere of metaphysical construction. Ritschl has given new prominence to the ancient principle of the vital connexion between Religion and Morality by his assertion that all Religious Convictions are Judgments of Value. Whatever we may think of the form in which he has expressed this principle, its substance appears to me to be certainly true. The things which in the sphere of Religion a man certainly believes and realizes he lives by, and, conversely, from a man's conduct we can reason back to his religious beliefs, if not to the dogma in which they are clothed.

This principle which is true, generally, is true most of all of the supreme religious teachers of mankind. In the religious beliefs of other men there is always much that is conventional. We have to distinguish carefully between what they think that they believe, and what they actually do

believe about God and the World and the Soul. But with the great religious Founders and Reformers it is otherwise. They have a fresh intuition of the Divine, and they are in earnest with what they have seen. It conditions their whole view of human duty and of human character. Gautama believes in Karma, and out of that belief springs the Buddhist Ethic. Mohammed believes in One God, "the great and terrible God," and out of that conviction springs the Moslem idea of Character. The ideal Moslem is the kind of man that corresponds to this idea of God. The Ethic of such teachers is rooted in their Religion, and no real historical student of any competence would endeavour to divorce the two. But what is true of these religious teachers is still more eminently true of Jesus. Of Him it is true, as of no other, that His whole character and His entire ethical ideal are determined by His idea of God and the World and the Soul. To say that His religious convictions are the postulates of His Practical Reason is to put the matter too weakly. The connexion between the two elements in His mind is even more close and vital. It would be truer to say that His Character and Ethical teaching is a deduction from his religious belief rather than that the belief is a postulate of His Moral Reason. However we may express it the heart of the matter lies here, that the union between

the Religion and the Morality of Jesus is so intimate that if the Religious Beliefs of Jesus are false the Character and the Ethic can no longer be held to be ideal for earnest men. Acceptance of the moral standards of Jesus carries with it, conversely, acceptance of that Spiritual Interpretation of the world in the light of which He lived and moved and had His being.

In proportion, then, to our acceptance of the Christian Morality as final, and to our reverence for Jesus as embodying the Moral Ideal, will be our recognition of the elemental Spiritual Ideas of Jesus as true, and as normative for our interpretation of the world. If the character is the Christian Ideal, and if the character rests at every point upon the truth of the Ideas, then these Ideas must hold the primary place as normative in the Christian system. They are the substructure on which the whole edifice of Christianity rests, the central principles, of which Apostolic Theology is the development and application.

The writer is not one of those who believe that Apostolic Theology went from the first on false tracks, or that, without incalculable impoverishment and damage, the Church can depart from the main lines of the Apostolic teaching, doctrinal, or mystical, or ethical. But, on the other hand, neither the Apostolic teaching nor the teaching of Jesus Himself can be rightly under-

stood if we begin by reading the Mind of Christ through the mind of the early centuries. The converse method seems the only true one, and an independent study of the mind of the historical Jesus forms the best gateway into the thought world of the Epistles and the Fathers.

What, then, are those distinctive Ideas of Jesus on which His Life and Character rest ? There are four that are central :—

(1) The Divine Fatherhood;

(2) His own necessary place in the spiritual realm as Mediator of the New Life ;

(3) The Freedom and Responsibility of Man ;

(4) The Kingdom of God.

It was chiefly the second and third of these ideas that the Apostolic thinkers fastened upon and wrought out with extraordinary clearness and power. Their results are classical for the Christian life. The first and fourth, also, of course appear in their writings, but not with the same fulness and clearness. For them the Gospels must be our norm.

The following chapters will discuss three of these ideas in fuller detail, but I shall briefly outline them here in order to indicate their inner connexion.

(1) Take, first, the Idea of the Divine Fatherhood.

The whole spirit and genius of the character of

Jesus are rooted in the Fatherhood of God. His life is essentially filial in its type. Absolute trust and absolute devotion are its watchwords. The Gospels show us His public life beginning with the Divine Words, "This is my Beloved Son," and closing with His dying cry, "Father, into thy Hands I commend my spirit," and throughout its course the dominating principle is the Revealing of the Father. He is in all things "the Son," after such a fashion that only the "Father" can understand Him, or He the "Father." Apart from the truth of the idea of the essential Fatherhood of God, the life and death of Jesus are no ideal for men; they are so penetrated by this filial faith, that, if it be mistaken, the whole type of character is mistaken also; while if that faith be well-grounded the character can never be outdone.

(2) But Jesus came not simply to live the filial life among men, but to communicate it. Here we come upon the second great principle of His teaching—His own necessary place as Mediator of the new filial Life.

It is altogether misleading to represent Him as one who only teaches truth hitherto unknown or neglected. He does not initiate the Kingdom as a Newton or a Darwin initiates a new epoch in human knowledge, by first divining and giving expression to a neglected truth, and then standing

aside and letting the truth win its way. He speaks as one who is the initiator of a cosmic change, rather than as a discoverer or teacher. He has come not only to reveal the Father, but to make it possible for all men to live the filial life as he lived it. He is not simply the announcer, He is the creator of the new Kingdom. It is through faith in Him that men enter it, and through a continually deepening fellowship with Him that they are sustained in the new filial life. To deal adequately here with this great and critical question of the permanent place of Christ as Mediator is impossible, but to omit it from any sketch, however brief, of His teaching would be to omit an essential and organic part. To err here is to lose the key to the greater part of Apostolic Christianity, as well as to any coherent account of the character and teaching of our Lord. The more we study the Character and Ideas of Christ, and the better we understand the peculiar nature of the religious experience which is depicted with such astonishing wealth and variety in the Apostolic writings, the less, I believe, shall we be content with the view that the work of Christ was only declarative of a standing Ideal Order of the Universe, and the more shall we be driven to the conclusion that the Divine Will was at work through Him in an essentially creative fashion; that in Him the great Power which

" sits dark at the Centre " came forth in Personal form and initiated a new spiritual epoch of Redemption and Regeneration as well as of Revelation on the day when Jesus proclaimed the advent of the Kingdom of God.

(3) The Freedom and Responsibility of Man. Christ's whole way of looking at human life is conditioned not only by His thought of God, but also by His view of man. His way of dealing with Human Sin, for instance, is quite incompatible with a fatalistic view of Human Nature. On any fatalistic view of the human will sin becomes simply a disease, an inevitable accident of man's finitude, for which he may be pitied, but for which it is unreasonable to condemn him. But nothing can be clearer than that this was not the view which Jesus took of human evil. We cannot from the fatalistic standpoint justify the way in which Jesus spoke, for instance, of the Pharisees or the peculiar note of moral indignation with which He always speaks of persistent and conscious sin. We feel that behind such words is the underlying conviction that such things *ought* not to be, and that, therefore, they need not have been ; that they are due, therefore, not to necessity, but to the wilful abuse of Freedom. Christ nowhere commits Himself to any account of the origin of evil, but He invariably recognizes it as an everywhere present reality, the responsibility for which lies

not on God, but on man. His whole dealing with human evil rests upon the conviction that Man has Freedom.

The same primordial conviction lies also behind the urgency with which He impels men towards perfection. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is Perfect." Man has freedom, a gift which may be indefinitely perverted, or which may be turned to infinitely noble uses.

This conception of Human Freedom in the Teaching of Jesus is so essential to any true picture of His teaching and character that it needs to be mentioned even in so summary an outline as this chapter contains. This is the more necessary as it lies outside the immediate plan of this volume to deal with it in any detail. But it is implicitly involved alike in the idea of the Divine Fatherhood, for this, as we shall see, implies a certain essential kinship of nature between God and Man; it is involved also in the Mediation of Jesus; and it is a necessary element in the Idea of the Kingdom of God, which is not an End fatalistically wrought out by Evolutionary forces, but a kingdom of the Free labouring within the sphere of the Divine Grace and the Divine Providence.

(4) In the light of the central truth that "God was in Christ" we can understand the permanent and necessary place of Christ as the Mediator of

the new life, and when we take it in conjunction with the principles of the Divine Fatherhood and of Human Freedom we can advance to the full understanding of the fourth Idea of Jesus—the Kingdom of God.

Jesus is not content with living the filial life for Himself alone. He believes that His Father has sent Him to found a new spiritual society, a new Order of Humanity, and, in spite of all the dangers involved in the use of the term, He links this new Society to the ideals of Hebrew Prophecy by describing it as the "Kingdom of God." Sometimes He speaks of that Kingdom as already present, and sometimes as future. In the former case He means that it is already germinally present among men; in the latter He thinks of it as able to attain its full embodiment and expression only in the Day of His triumph.

He can view it in this twofold aspect because the Kingdom is not only the goal of human effort and agony, not only a great spiritual structure to be slowly built up as men have built up the great structure of civilization; it is, from the first, a Kingdom of the Divine grace, a free gift of God to men. In this latter sense it is complete from the first. It exists, in principle, in Jesus the Mediator, by faith in Whom a man enters the great Divine Human Society, becomes thereby an inheritor of the Divine Forgiveness, the Divine

Providence, and the Divine Spirit, and finds at once his place and work as a son of God in the nascent commonwealth of redeemed humanity.

But the Kingdom of God is also Future. Complete in principle as it is from the first, it has to be wrought out and built up in human history by the toil and warfare and patient endurance of the Church. The human race has to be won into its communion, and human society has to be moralized up to the Christ standard, until at every point it is dominated by the filial life. Not till then will the Kingdom have fully come. Hence, on this view, the Christian life, the life of the Church, is one long crusade for the Kingdom of God. Freed from spiritual and temporal care by faith in God's Providence and God's Grace, the disciple is to devote himself in the most absolute fashion to the great spiritual commonwealth. He is to pray for it before he prays for himself; he is to seek it above all things; he is to face the Cross itself for its sake. Sparta or Rome never made such demands upon its citizens as Jesus made upon His followers on behalf of the Kingdom. No human commonwealth has ever roused so grand an enthusiasm of patriotism in its citizens as burned in the spirit of Jesus for the great City of God. For it His followers are to exult in persecution, to hate the dearest human ties that fetter their supreme consecration, to lose their meaner selves

and find their true selves in resolute and thoroughgoing devotion to its interests. The whole drift of Christ's teaching is thus to demand public spirit on the largest and grandest scale on behalf of a great Divine-Human Commonwealth, towards whose consummation all God's ways with man converge. The supreme example of such public spirit is found in His own Life and Death, which made that Kingdom possible to men. Such, in briefest outline, is the teaching of Jesus regarding the Kingdom of God.

By thus advancing from reverence for the Character to acceptance of the Principles of Jesus, and from that, again, to recognition of Him as Mediator of the new filial Life of the Kingdom and Lord of the soul—the current admiration of Jesus can best be turned into living faith and the obedience of the will. When that return to faith takes place the Christian Church will find that she has not had all this long travail of heart and brain for nothing. She will find rather that on the way she has gained positive results of incalculable value for the world at the present crisis of its History. I shall now endeavour to show that this is the case.

JESUS AND THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

Chapter II

JESUS AND THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

IT is now nearly forty years since *Ecce Homo* was published. The stir which the appearance of that famous volume created in the religious world can be clearly traced in the reviews and biographies of the time. To Dean Church, "the unknown champion, who comes into the field with barred vizor and no cognizance on his shield," was one "who has a right to claim deference from those who think deepest and know most"; Dean Stanley, while haunted by the dire surmise that the unknown writer might, perhaps, be speaking from a more dogmatic standpoint than the volume itself indicated, asserted that it contained "thoughts sufficient to occupy the minds and sustain the hopes of a whole generation"; while Mr. Gladstone gave generous welcome to the book as "an earnest, powerful and original contribution" towards the restoration of faith in the Incarnation. Pusey, on the other hand, as we learn from Mr. Gladstone's own *Biography*,

regarded the spirit of the volume with "loathing," while Lord Shaftesbury spoke of it as "the vilest book that was ever vomited out of the jaws of hell."

To one who reads the work to-day both praise and blame seem much exaggerated. He feels that in many respects it is a noble and distinguished book, and recognizes that its failure to move him to such transports of admiration or indignation may be due to the fact that its wide popularity and influence have long robbed its distinctive ideas of their novelty. But through the whole work there runs one radical defect which prevents it from being in any sense great. It is true that this defect is explicitly recognized by the author himself, and is stated by him to be due to express design: "My book," he says in effect, "is confessedly a fragment. I do not profess here to give any complete account of the Personality of Jesus. Christ as the creator of modern theology will make the subject of another volume. What I do seek to do is to bring out the moral content of the teaching, the manward side of His activity."

Now, if this could be done, the plea might be admitted; but, as a matter of fact, it cannot, and *Ecce Homo*, with all its originality and beauty, is simply another illustration of this truth. The aim of the writer, as he himself said, was to reach a better understanding of the historical Jesus than current explanations offered; for "after all that

had been said there was no character whose motives, objects and feelings remained so incomprehensible to him." The main reason of the failure of *Ecce Homo* to give such an intelligible historical account lies just in this attempted isolation of the ethical from the religious teaching of Jesus. The result, with all its nobility and beauty and originality, reminds us of an unfinished portrait. We approach the canvas, and two eyes gaze at us from the dull background. They are finely painted, but we have never seen anything like them before. There is something singularly familiar and even impressive about them, and yet they haunt us with the sense of the abnormal, for as they stand there is nothing like them on earth. They belong to a missing setting, with which they are in a more intimate relation than we had, perhaps, before realized, and in that setting alone can they shine with meaning. So is it with the fragmentary portrait of Jesus which the distinguished author has given us. Striking as is his study, admirably as it brings out neglected but important aspects of its original, and incomplete as every future portrait must be that does not take account of his contribution, yet we cannot help feeling that the Christ whom he draws is wellnigh as unintelligible as before, and that no living and penetrating mind can long remain content with the idea of Him which the book gives, but

must either move on to a fuller or recede to a scantier creed. The latter as we know was the event, for the sequel to *Ecce Homo* was not the treaties on the religious teaching of Jesus which had been promised, but "Natural Religion."

Let us see in further detail how the initial error in conception vitiates the later treatment. The motive force of Christianity is said to be the "Enthusiasm of Humanity," an enthusiasm which is awakened by the Personality of Jesus, Who reveals by His character what men may become, and thereby teaches us to see in every human creature the ideal behind the real. True, we say, so far as it goes, but how utterly inadequate! The mightiest driving impulse of Christianity is not Christ's revelation of the possibilities of humanity, but His revelation of the essential nature of Almighty God, of His kinship with mankind, and of His Purpose of redeeming Love. It is the same fatal initial defect, as an acute critic [1] has shown, that vitiates the author's view of the Church and the Kingdom of God. It is one of the great merits of the book, as Dean Church at once pointed out, that it lays emphasis on the fact that Christ was not simply a religious teacher, but that he was the Founder of the greatest Society that the world has ever seen. But in *Ecce Homo*

[1] Mackintosh, *Christ and the Jewish Law* (Appendix).

the Church naturally takes a Comtist form. It is an association of men for the culture of the Enthusiasm of Humanity and the virtues springing from it. For the adequate understanding and treatment of the essentially spiritual idea of the Kingdom of God the author's method leaves him no room, and so he easily identifies the Kingdom with the visible Church, an error which the past history of Christianity has shown to have had the gravest consequences.

But it is in its defective account of the Personality of Jesus that the book suffers most fatally from the limitation of its plan. The Jesus Whom it depicts is not a man in the ordinary sense of the term. He is a "new Jehovah," the Legislator, the Judge, and the King of the Kingdom of God. He appears like some astral portent, unprecedented in the past, and unparalleled since His day. It is, of course, impossible for the author strictly and consistently to carry out his plan. He is compelled, in spite of it, to refer again and again to the unseen One as Jesus conceived Him. But He is dim and shadowy and ineffectual in comparison with the figure of the "new Jehovah." Jesus, therefore, inevitably appears as a self-moved and independent Figure, Who draws to Himself and centres in Himself the devotion of His followers, and out of Himself as a spiritual source sends forth the regenerating moral energy which they

need. Such a character is certainly not the Jesus of History, however it may resemble Him in certain significant traits of His Personality. It is, in fact, so distinct from the human ideal that we can hardly understand why contemplation of it should awaken the Enthusiasm of Humanity, if that Enthusiasm is to be kindled, in the way that the author sets forth, by the simple contemplation of Jesus as realizing in Himself the ideal possibilities that are latent in the soul of every man. It is true that the same objection is taken against every other view of the Personality of Jesus other than the strictly Humanitarian interpretation; but, as I have indicated above, the true answer to this objection is that the main source of the Christian Enthusiasm of Humanity lies in the Personal revelation of God which we find in Jesus, and from this answer the author of *Ecce Homo* is by his plan excluded. It must be repeated that the picture which we have here is not the actual historical Jesus. The distinctive note of the Jesus of the Gospels is that in all things He is the Son of the Father; and that He is this so consistently and so massively that to exclude all consideration of that element in His life is to reduce the story to chaos. His entire character and work are cast solidly in the mould of that primordial and all-determining certainty of the Divine Fatherhood. His moral teaching, severed from that principle,

is as unintelligible as would be the Buddhist ethic apart from its idea of Karma, or the Mohammedan polemic against idols without its doctrines of the Unity and Spirituality of God.

Just as we should be unable to give anything but a distorted account of Hebrew Prophecy if we eliminated from our consideration of it the central interest of the prophets, the unfolding Idea of God which shaped all their thoughts, and drove them in succession into the arena, Amos to proclaim His Justice, Hosea His Love, and Isaiah His Holiness; just as it is here in this profound religious interest alone that we can find the key to their personalities and life work, so is it, also, with the life of Jesus. Like each of His great forerunners He has a new insight into the nature of God, and out of this there springs a new foresight as to human destiny, and a new ideal as to human life. The generative and determining influence in all His thoughts and actions is His Idea of God as Father.

The name, it is true, was not an absolute novelty in the history of religion. In the Aryan religions of the East and West, of which Jesus knew nothing, the Supreme One was named the All-Father. But that name seems simply to have been a vivid figure for Creatorship, an obvious metaphor for the great Creator and Sustainer of all. The Fatherhood which Jesus manifested,

while nominally identical, is a far graver, deeper, and more intimate relationship than this.

It is true, also, that in the Old Testament God is occasionally spoken of as Father. But the name is always used either of God's relationship to Israel as a people, or to the king as representative of the race, and not of His relationship to the individual soul. The general conception of God which we find in the Old Testament is that of Sovereign, and it is significant that in the Book of Psalms, which best expresses the sense of personal religion, the name "Father" as applied to God is absent except in one passing metaphor,[1] while in the passage in the Prophetic writings where the ideal of humanity rises to the highest and grandest point, the term used is not "Son" but "Servant."

In later Judaism there are some indications of an advance to the Christian idea. The deepening and individualising of religion which began with the Exile had led to the vaticination, for we can hardly call it more, that God's Fatherhood extended not only to races but to individuals. There are liturgical instances of the use of the name in this way, and casual illustrations of the same tendency. But the "spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry 'Abba Father,'" which floods the New Testament, is alien from the broad current

[1] Psalm ciii. 13, "Like as a Father."

of the later Judaism, whose dominant tendency was to remove God to a more and more exalted position above the world of mankind. Thus while Christ's use of the name "Father" is not literally unprecedented in Judaism, the occurrence of that name in the later post-exilic period is rather to be taken as the expression of a hope and desire than of a secure confidence. The soul of the devout world of Judaism is "dreaming of things to come." No great advance in religious progress is in fact ever entirely unprecedented or unheralded by harbingers of a sunnier time. The same law that holds good of the advance of spiritual knowledge in the individual holds also in the progress of the race. Vaticinations, intuitions, aspirations, are the invariable forerunners of the new revelation.

But what is absolutely new in Jesus and in the Christian Church is the depth and passion of conviction, the liberty and the joy with which the faith in the Father is held and proclaimed.

Coming now to a closer study of the Fatherhood of God in the teaching of Jesus, we find (1), first, that this idea is set forth in an entirely unique way.

We know from study of the Hebrew prophets how their work was accomplished. Herald after herald stepped forward, driven by the compulsion of the new insight that he had into the nature

and the will of Jehovah, uttered his message with all the force of his individuality, and then passed away. We still associate their names with their discoveries. When we think of Amos we think of his stern message of God's Justice, and with Hosea we associate the message of God's Love. But the converse is untrue. When we think of the Righteousness of God or of His Love, who remembers either Hosea or Amos?

But when we think of God as "the Father," we think at once of "the Son." That, at least, is certainly true of the New Testament writers. Ritschl has truly said that the distinctive New Testament name for God is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the aspect of the Fatherhood of God that, as in a Rembrandt picture, has the light falling upon it in the New Testament. The cause of this is, no doubt, found in the extraordinary impression which the Personality of Jesus made upon the first generation of disciples, the impression that here was a type of character absolutely unprecedented, which stood in relations to God unlike those in which lawgiver, or psalmist, or prophet had stood to Him. Jesus was, indeed, inspired by the Enthusiasm of Humanity as none other has ever been, but He was inspired by a greater enthusiasm for God, and until we realize the dominant place which this had in all His life we

miss the true "secret of Jesus." This is the determining thing in Him, this profound veneration and love for One who is unseen but ever present, One on whom Humanity by its unbelief and sin inflicts a continual wrong, but whom it is life to know, and whom it is His passion to reveal to the blinded sons of men. We cannot exaggerate this enthusiasm for God which dominated the mind of Jesus. We may compare it to the Artist's wonder at the amazing Beauty of the World, which drives him to hopeless and yet delightful labour; to the enthusiasm of the Man of Science for the stupendous greatness of the Nature which it is his joy to study; to the absorbing hero-worship of Youth for some "brave soldier in the warfare of the Liberation of Humanity"; or to the intense affection for kinsman or friend. It is like all these together, but it is more than these. No one ever felt to the unknown God as Jesus felt towards Him. That no one ever felt in this fashion before Him is certain, and even since His coming His closest disciples look on this characteristic of their Master with wonder. On the faith of all others there lies some shadow of misgiving. The sense of the vastness and mystery of the world, the sense of guilt, and the want of elevation and steadiness and power in the soul of man obscure his vision. The profound

veneration, the intimate love, the pure enthusiasm of Jesus for God stand alone in history and form the only Source from which this new consciousness expressed by the new name, "the Father," could have arisen.

The use of a new name for anything implies a measure of dissatisfaction with those in former use. Jesus felt towards all the other names for God as a great painter might feel towards imperfect portraits of some familiar friend. He says, "The features are there, the outlines are correct, the colour is good, but something is wanting: it is not the very man"; and so from all the resources of memory and knowledge and skill, he paints the very soul of the departed friend. The whole teaching and life and death of Jesus are just such an endeavour—the endeavour to manifest God as He knew Him; and having the whole world of Nature and Humanity from which to describe God, He chose the familiar name of "Father."

Yet we should err if we limited His work of revealing the Father to verbal teaching and illustration of the new Name. This transformation of the Idea of God has in it the entire weight of a Personality. Looking at the matter from the plane of history, we say that the cause was the all-powerful influence of a great Individuality. Teaching was only one of many influences by

which the Personality of Jesus expressed its true genius and accomplished its mission. Character is a greater thing than any verbal teaching can express. Personality may sometimes come out better in silence than in speech; it utters itself in gesture, in action, in expression, in attitude, in casual utterances and judgments, in a man's bearing under trial or emergency, in unnumbered other ways. It was thus that the filial Individuality of Jesus made its impression on the minds of the Eleven, an impression so profound that they could never afterwards think of "the Father" without thinking of the "Son," or think of "the Son" without the figure of "the Father" rising above them. The more they understood their Master the more they realized that in all things He was "the Son of God." It is true that in their time that term "Son of God" had a peculiar Messianic significance, just as in ours it has acquired by the controversies of many centuries a theological meaning; but the Messianic phraseology only supplied a suitable expression for a new moral and spiritual ideal.

The Apostles had other terms lying ready to hand in what has been called the great "Lexicon" of the Old Testament. They might have called Jesus "The Servant of the Lord," as they might have called Him, with the author of *Ecce Homo*, a "new Jehovah." But neither

term could have so accurately described Him, have so adequately expressed the *Ethos* of Jesus as the one which they did habitually use. They did not coin it, nor did He Himself, but no more precisely truthful term could have been found to describe the Personality. Once or twice in the speeches in the Acts the term " Servant of the Lord " is used, and then it disappears. It is morally inadequate to the riches of the truth. Paul may call himself a " servant of the Lord," but he reserves another name for Jesus. Even for himself he feels the name inadequate, and how much more for Him, who has liberated him and given him the spirit of Sonship.

On the other hand, the picture of Jesus in the Gospels is not that of a self-existent, self-centred, independent greatness. In everything He realizes the character of a Son. He speaks of Himself as deriving His " Life " from the Father ; as dependent on His Providence and His Spirit ; as living not to do His own will, but the Will of Him that sent Him ; as finding His chief joy in revealing the Father, and in finishing His work. This central principle of the life of Jesus might be illustrated from all the Gospels with abounding detail, but enough has been said when we quote His first recorded saying, " Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business ? " and His dying words, " Father, into Thy hands I commend

my spirit." With these sayings the Life that lay between was throughout and in everything in harmony. Everything in the character and teaching of Jesus is staked so absolutely on the Fatherhood of God, that if we cannot accept His first principle, His life must cease to be ideal for us; for a life so consistently grounded in a mistaken conviction can never be ideal for earnest men.

Now, as has already been said, it is this aspect of the Divine Fatherhood—the Fatherhood of God relatively to Jesus—which impressed most deeply the first generation of Christians. The spectacle of Christ's communion with God haunted them as the norm and type of what life ought to be, yet as something so far above what they from their own resources could realize, that they felt that only through continued association with Him could they maintain it. Whenever, therefore, they endeavoured to realize the Divine Fatherhood, there rose up in their imagination the Figure of the Son as they remembered Him; and so, too, when they remembered the Son, the spiritual heavens overhead became luminous and alive with the presence of the Father.

To some, however, this inseparable association of the Father and the Son seems an excrescence on the pure Revelation of the Father. They believe that Jesus would have been more successful

as a religious teacher had He been able to prevent what, with Emerson, they deem to be "noxious exaggeration" in the traditional Christian estimate of the religious value of Jesus. But had it taken place otherwise; had Jesus simply revealed new truth about God in the purely prophetic fashion, as Amos, Hosea and Isaiah did—each coming forward to proclaim his message, and then stepping back into the shadow that he might let the new truth shine—what would have been the practical result? The announcement of God as Father would have marked a great advance in religion, but each one who received it would have been flung back upon his own experiences and memories of human fatherhood, each would have conceived the Fatherhood in Heaven in terms solely of the fatherhoods that he had known on earth. Great as the advance would have been, it would have had its dangers also. Suppose the new truth proclaimed to a people in which the standard of family life is lax and sensual, could we view the probable consequences without serious apprehension? Are there not very many in our own land to whom the proclamation of God as Father would be anything but a true Gospel? Such a name to these wronged and disinherited men and women may be far less eloquent than the name of "Sovereign," or than the simple name of "God." Even where

it is not so, where the name is dear and sacred above all other words spoken by the human tongue; where men possess with gratitude the noblest of all human heritages of the soul, the memory of a Christian home, the name must at best be an imperfect symbol of God. There must inevitably cleave to it some taint of human imperfection. But when the name of Father is associated with the name of Jesus, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," it is as it were purified and made great, and adequate to the deepest needs and the highest aspirations of the soul. That God should be to me a Father such as Jesus conceived Him to be is all that I or any man can want. "What further can be sought for or declared?" Jesus Christ has dealt with these human symbols as a great poet deals with his mother tongue. It is, as when Dante, passing by the noble but dead classical language, took the despised mother tongue and made it speak home to the heart and imagination, and awaken a thousand mute chords of memory and association, calling to life its hidden melody and strength and majesty, and giving a new and living language to the world. So Christ passed by the grand classical speech of religion, which was fast becoming a dead language to the living world, under the deepening sense of the value of the individual soul and the inadequacy of a merely

national religion, and took up the father and mother tongue, the dialect of the common human heart, and, at His summons and by the transfiguring power of His Personality, the name of Father became pure and great enough to describe the inmost nature of the Eternal One. Thus, when the New Testament writers speak of God as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," the name is as it were "baptized into Christ," and emerges from the purifying waters regenerated and cleansed, and alone henceforward of all names fitted to express the heart of the Eternal.

It has been said above that the whole Character and Spiritual World-View of Jesus are solidly cast in the mould of the Idea of the Fatherhood of God. In everything His Life is perfectly filial.

But (2) He was not content with living a life of solitary communion with God, as if only He and God existed in the world. The form which His vocation as Son of God takes is the lifelong enterprise of winning Humanity into His own filial life, a vocation which He describes in a great variety of terms: now as "the seeking and saving of the lost"; now as the "giving of Eternal Life"; and now as the bringing in of the "Kingdom of God."

But before we enter on this discussion we have

to deal with a preliminary question, we have to ask what was His view of the nature and state of men. Does he look on them as having by nature any real kinship with His Father? Does the Fatherhood in the faith of which He lived extend to them?

Evangelical Theology in its earlier forms made little use of the Idea of the universal Fatherhood of God. The practical motive of this omission was no doubt the fear that the assertion of the universal Fatherhood of God would lead to the obscuring of the distinction between the believer and the unbeliever, and thereby to the dulling of the sense of the supreme privilege of the Christian. Dr. Candlish[1] in the last generation, stated this view in its most uncompromising form, and it is still maintained by some modern Theologians.

This way of regarding the matter attaches itself to certain expressions in the Epistles and in the Fourth Gospel, where Christians are spoken of as being "adopted" into the "family of God," as attaining "the right to become sons of God" and so on. From this it is concluded that our Lord did not in any real sense hold the universal Fatherhood of God, but that this extension of the Idea is a Humanitarian gloss on the teaching of the Gospels.

[1] Cunningham Lectures on *The Fatherhood of God.*

The practical motive of this contention is important, and it may be conceded that there is less positive evidence for holding that Jesus taught the universal Fatherhood than the other two aspects of the truth, the divine Fatherhood over Himself and over all His disciples. Yet the evidence for the universal Fatherhood, derived from His teaching and His whole attitude to men, seems to me convincing. I shall not enter here into the exegetical argument for this view, as that is given in detail by the great majority of modern writers in Biblical Theology who have examined the teaching of Jesus. But His whole attitude to men, even to unbelieving men, appears to me to presuppose this truth.

Take, for instance, His view of the duty of Faith in Himself, and the sin of unbelief. He everywhere assumes that man's highest duty is to accept him as Saviour and Lord. He assumes that the life He is living is the moral and spiritual ideal for men. It is their duty to recognize this just as it is their duty to be honest and to speak the truth. But, as we have seen, His whole Life is essentially filial, is moulded in the conviction that God is His Father. Hence, the fact that we find Him everywhere assuming that men should live this Life, that it is their true Life, plainly carries with it the assumption that God is their Father too. Deny this and assert that God is

simply their Sovereign, and the Life of Jesus ceases to be ideal for them. The true ideal for them in such a case will be the life of the subject and not of the son.

What thus comes to light when we analyse the view of Faith which Jesus taught is surely also involved in all His dealings with men. He seems always to assume, in His relations even with publicans and sinners, that their true self is their better self, and that this better self is closely akin to Himself. The underlying idea of our Lord's whole outlook upon human life, in its kinship with God and in its alienation from Him, comes to light with the utmost clearness in the parable of the Prodigal Son, and He has said nothing on the whole matter more pregnant with meaning than these words : " But when he came to himself he said . . . I will arise and go to my father."

But this confidence of Jesus that in his deepest nature man was akin to God never led Him into any shallow estimate of the extent to which moral evil had actually enslaved and perverted him. He everywhere assumes that, while God is the Father, men are of themselves impotent to act in the faith of this truth and to live as sons. The Son-Life, which was His vital breath, was, He knew, absolutely unique in the world, and He always speaks of His own appearing as the initia-

tion of a new and higher life which is meant for all mankind.

How profoundly the difference between the old life and the new was felt we can see from the metaphors which the first Christians used to describe the transition. Jesus is reported by the Fourth Evangelist to have described that change as a " new birth " or " birth from above " ; Paul compares it to the radical change in civil status caused by " adoption " ; and John says, " As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become sons of God." The force of these and kindred metaphors has, as we have seen, led many to deny that the universal Fatherhood of God is taught in the New Testament ; but this is to press such expressions far beyond what they were intended to convey.

The figure of a " new birth " does not imply any change of personality ; it is the same man who is twice born, and it is of that enduring personality that we speak when we say that God is the Father of the soul of man. Moreover, the figure of the new birth, strong as it appears, is amply justified when we think of " the new and stupendous environment " into which a man comes by faith in the Son of God.

That Paul by the use of the figure of " adoption " was not using the hard and fast language of scientific theology is clear from the fact that, in

one of the instances in which he uses it to describe the great transition, the person "adopted" is the heir himself, whose minority comes to an end with the act.

Finally, the whole class of passages referred to, and in particular the passage quoted from the Fourth Gospel, are vivid but truthful descriptions of the kind of change which happens when man returns to God.

When we do full justice to both sides of the teaching of Jesus, His teaching as to the universal Fatherhood on the one hand, and as to the depth of human ruin on the other, we shall not be surprised at the force of the expressions used to express the contrast between the old life and the new. Wendt brings out the two sides of the teaching of Jesus in this matter in a forcible paradox: "God is the loving Father of all men, nevertheless men must become sons of the Father"; "God does not become the Father even of those who become His sons." Such teaching has a paradoxical ring which offends the logician, but the difficulty is one of words rather than of moral realities. We are familiar with practically the same paradox in philosophy, and in that sphere it gives us no trouble to assert in one breath that "man is a rational creature" and in the next to urge him to break away from "irrationality" and to "act according to reason." The vivid

and striking metaphors of the New Testament express the profound sense of the revolution which Jesus accomplished in creating that consciousness of sonship which is a distinctive note of the New Testament life.

It is a great victory of faith sincerely to call the stupendous God "our Father"—difficult in that age, and, perhaps, even more difficult in our own, in a world which has proved so much vaster and more awful than our forefathers dreamed. Yet that this is what Jesus was able to achieve in His followers is written broad and plain in those earliest writings, in which the authors are ever labouring to express their sense of the greatness of the change. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God; and such we are"; "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of sonship whereby we cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God"; "He is not ashamed to call us brethren"—these are but a few typical examples from a great anthology of similar passages which might be gleaned from the New Testament writings. Everywhere there is the sense of a great transition, the passing away of an old world and the dawn of a new.

Now, how did Jesus accomplish this? How

was He able to transform the cowering awe of later Judaism into the radiant sense of sonship which we find in the New Testament? How, in a word, did he effect His great historic work of reconciliation?

There is something here far deeper and wider than we can account for by the magnetic spell of a great Personality who is merely human. I hope to prove this in more detail in the following chapter. But I shall now simply endeavour briefly to enumerate the elements of His reconciling vocation.

In order that the servile consciousness of man may be transformed into the filial, God's Nature and his own ideal possibilities must be revealed to him; he must be reconciled to the facts of Life, his sense of guilt must be removed, and the problem of his own moral weakness and indwelling evil must in some way be solved.

(*a*) In order that God and man should be reconciled, man must have clear light as to the nature of God, and as to the kind of life that God requires of him.

Without such light there can be no communion between God and Man. This twofold revelation, as we have seen, has been perfectly accomplished by the filial life of Jesus, which has at once disclosed the inmost nature of the hidden Author and Maintainer of the world, and manifested the human ideal.

(*b*) In order that he may be reconciled to God, man needs to be reconciled to the order of Life.

So long as man is in the dark as to the real bearing of the mighty world-processes around him, unable to find justice or love in the stupendous frame of things, uncertain as to whether or not he is in the grasp of a malevolent or indifferent fate, so long must reconciliation with its Creator and Maintainer be impossible to him. Not only must the nature of God be revealed, but it must be made possible for him to recognize God in Action in His world. He must have enough of light at least to find his way, and the burden imposed upon him by his own finitude and ignorance must not be too crushing.

Here in this difficulty we have one of the central problems of the Old Testament, which has found immortal expression in the Book of Job. Job, as we know, fights his way at last to a half solution of the mystery. It is the yearning for reconciliation with God, a reconciliation which will satisfy what is highest and deepest within him, that is the driving motive in all his reasoning and rebellion, and that at last leads him to the dim vaticination of a life to come; but the drama shows how far as yet the loftiest minds and noblest hearts of the most spiritually advanced peoples were from a true solution.

Now, Christ has at least partially solved this

problem for mankind, not only by bringing life and immortality to light through His gospel, but by His teaching concerning the Divine Providence, and its world-goal, by His Life of joyous and unbroken faith in the Father, and by His death on the Cross, as well as by the supreme proof given by that Cross that in the hands of God the world's uttermost evil may be overruled for the highest good. No man who enters truly into the spirit of Jesus can find the world-order alien to his soul. The more the thoughts and the spirit of Jesus pass into him through fellowship with the Lord, the more is he able to say that " all things are his," that " all things work together for good to them that love God," and that " in Christ he is of good cheer " in that He has overcome the world, for he knows that he is living in an all-embracing, continuous order of Fatherly Providences, which in him and through him are working out counsels of unfathomable love and wisdom.

(*c*) Further, for reconciliation with God man needs to have his guilt taken away.

All the higher religions bear witness to this radical hindrance to communion with God, for all bear witness, by expiatory sacrifices or observances, to the sense of demerit which is an ineradicable trait of all the higher life of man. The vast raising and clearing of the ideal which Jesus Christ effected has deepened this sense of

guilt in all who have come under His influence. That sense of evil which haunts the Christian has been compared to "the dart of Epaminondas." For a man to be transfixed by it is anguish indeed, and yet if it be withdrawn the man must die. Here is the fatal dilemma of the soul. Cardinal Newman has expressed it in the well-known lines in the "Dream of Gerontius":—

The sight of Him will kindle in thy heart
All tender, gracious, reverential thoughts . .
And thou wilt hate and loathe thyself; for, though
Now sinless, thou wilt feel that thou hast sinned,
As never thou didst feel; and wilt desire
To slink away and hide thee from His sight:
And yet wilt have a longing aye to dwell
Within the beauty of His countenance.
And these two pains, so counter and so keen—
The longing for Him, when thou seest Him not;
The shame of self at thought of seeing Him—
Will be thy veriest, sharpest purgatory.

What is here said of the disembodied spirit is true of the advancing Christian experience. It moves between the two poles: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," and "Lord, to whom shall we go but unto Thee?" The more clearly we know God, the more do we feel our own sinfulness; the more we long for Him, the more do we tend to shrink back dismayed.

Now, how did Christ overcome this supreme

obstacle? By manifesting the forgiveness of God. "It is all true," He is ever in effect saying, "but the Father forgives you, has put away your guilt, receives you to the place of sons. He has sent me to be that forgiveness manifested, embodied. I am the Forgiveness of God." We need to grasp this element in His message if we wish to understand the heart of it. It is not simply the Revelation of truth about God; it is a personal message of the forgiveness of God to individual spirits. Moreover, it is a standing possession of the Christian life. Just as the Disciple of Christ lives in a world of Divine Providences—a steadfast, ordered world which does not change but endures—so through Christ he also lives in an unchanging world of Divine Forgiveness. Both are presuppositions of the Christian life. Were they at any moment withdrawn, the New Life would fall in ruins. Just as our bodies live by the natural environment with which they are vitally correlated—air, earth, and sunlight and the rest—so do our souls live their new life in an environment of continued Providence and Forgiveness. God's Forgiveness is not given to the Christian by fits and starts, it is as complete from the first as it ever will be, it is a standing condition into which he comes through faith in Jesus, a condition by virtue of which alone can he live the kind of life and do the kind of work which God

needs in His Kingdom. Luther has expressed this thought with his wonted vividness.[1]

"Just as the sun shines and illuminates none the less brightly when I close my eyes, so this throne of grace, or this forgiveness of sins, is always there, even although I fall. And just as I see the sun again when I open my eyes, so also I have forgiveness of sins once more when I look up and come back to Christ. Wherefore we are not to measure forgiveness so narrowly as the fools dream."

Now it has been truly said "that to every one who really experiences it, forgiveness comes not as a matter of course, but as an astounding revelation of love."[2] I think we must go even further, and say that there is here something actually mysterious, something which goes quite beyond what we can fully account for, something which leaves us standing in perplexity before the question, "If God be truly perfect how can He treat sinful men after this fashion?" True, we need it, we cannot live the new life without it. But—is it *right*? No man, I believe, can penetrate to the living heart of the Apostolic experience unless he feels the pressure of this question, and only

[1] Quoted by Herrmann: *Communion with God*, English Translation, p. 193, from Erlangen Edition of *Works*, xiv. 294.

[2] *Communion with God*, p. 194

when we raise it are we in a position to understand either Christ's own references to His death as a " ransom " and to His blood as " shed for the remission of sins," or to the way in which the later Apostolic thought deals with the fact of Redemption as something wrought out for men by the sacrifice of Christ, as an element in His great work of reconciliation.

(*d*) Finally, in order that men may be reconciled to God, the problem of man's inner weakness must be solved.

However we may account for it, there is a taint in the blood, an alien element in the soul which makes it impotent to realize its ideal sonship. Whether we use the language of traditional Theology, or of modern Biological and Psychological Science; whether we speak of " Original Sin," of " Depravity " and of " the Flesh," or of " Heredity " and the " Subliminal consciousness," all serious and thorough thinking recognizes that a man's nature is a larger and a deeper thing than the limited area of mental and emotional and volitional phenomena of which at any moment he is vaguely or distinctly conscious or reminiscent, and that if evil is to be thoroughly eradicated in him, and reconciliation fully realized, the reconciling power must in some way enter that dark subliminal region, and there stem the perilous tides of Heredity.

Now we have the Flesh always with us, a perpetual source of pressure and of danger, and therefore such a Power of Reconciliation must be as steady and more mighty than that alien force; it must, in short, be an influence given, not by fits and starts, but a standing possession. It is when we approach the subject thus, that we can best understand the mystical side of our Lord's Teaching, which is most fully brought out in the Fourth Gospel, His words about the new birth and the new life, which is realized by those "abiding" in Him.

Summing up then what has been said, we find that according to the Gospels a man is, as it were, born by faith "into a new and stupendous environment" in which he finds it possible to live the life of a son. Through the Mediation of the Son of God he shares, along with his redeemed brethren, the radiant sense of the knowledge of God as His Father; of that Father's enduring forgiveness of all his sins; of that Father's enduring Providence, which makes of all his complex experiences of Life one prolonged conspiracy for his highest good, to him and to all; and finally, of the enduring possession of that Father's indwelling Spirit, which regenerates him and renews the springs of his life in Jesus from hour to hour and from day to day. Just as the whole amazing alchemy of Nature has laboured through all the ages towards

the evolution of man—the sequence of the seasons, the earthquake and eclipse, the rain, the sun, the frost, the wind, the dew—all bearing on the shaping of man, so all the mighty cosmos of the new spiritual world—God's Grace, His Providence, His Spirit—all the myriad spiritual influences mediated through His Son, bear upon the development of the son-life in man, the realizing in man of the life corresponding to the Eternal Fatherhood of God. The whole vast system of Nature, Providence and Grace thus becomes continuous, Nature preparing the way for Providence, and Nature and Providence for Grace, the common end being the "coming of the Kingdom of God," or, to put the same idea in other words, the "bringing of many sons to glory," the realizing of the son-life in its full beauty and perfection.

All the traditional expressions whereby the Church has expressed the birth and the growth of the Christian life in man—Conversion, Regeneration, Justification and Sanctification—relate simply to phases in the rise and development of this son-life, in this progressive awakening of the soul of man to the full meaning of the Fatherhood of God; and the peculiar Christian Morality is simply the carrying out of this fundamental idea in the practical life of the world. Here is our primordial, determining conception; but it is equally true, as has throughout been asserted and

assumed, that this son-life is only to be actually realized through the Mediation of the Son of God It is from Him that we get our knowledge of the Father, and through Him that confidence in the Father is ever rekindled and kept burning through all the tempests and winters of the world ; from Him that we get the ever renewed assurance of that Father's forgiveness, an assurance to be had nowhere else in all the philosophies and religions of time ; and from Him, again, receive that perpetually renewed influx of moral and spiritual energy and hope, that restoration and clearing of the soul which are necessary to the maintenance of the New Life and its progressive victory over the evil heredities of the Old. Thus the Christian life can never dispense with Jesus Christ. Rather is its progress marked and measured at every stage by its increasing dependence on Him who is the Life and Light of Men. We have thus considered in outline the relation in which the determining Idea of the Fatherhood of God stands to what I have called the second of the four great principles of Jesus, His view of His own necessary place as Mediator of the new life. How should we view it relatively to the fourth of these, His Idea of the Kingdom of God ?

The new recognition of the importance of this fourth principle—which has come with the rise

of the Science of Biblical Theology—has created a certain disturbance in Christian Dogmatics. On the one hand, there are those who are so impressed by the Idea of the Kingdom of God that they give it the supreme place, and make it the all-determining category of Christian truth. Others, again, of a more cautious and conservative type, find it difficult to equate it with the things that are most surely believed among them, and look with suspicion upon it as a spurious discovery. The so-called treasure, they think, was buried by the men who have unearthed it. It is another example of the saying that each man finds in the Bible what he sets out to seek.

Both views are extreme. The endeavour to make the Kingdom the all-determining category is perhaps responsible for what some complain of. There is, they say, a certain hardness and externality involved in the very idea of a kingdom. It suggests outward strength and splendour, imperial sway, legislatures, tribunals, armies and fleets, the relations of men in the mass and so on. However indispensable such things may be for the secular life of man, they do not concern the soul, and the imagery borrowed from them must fail to express the most personal and intimate of all relations, that of the soul with its God. There

is force and truth in this protest, but it is directed rather against a one-sided presentation of the truth than against the Idea itself. It is permissible even to those who owe most to the magnificent work of German scholarship to think that to some extent the conception of the "Reich Gottes," there prevalent, has borrowed something alien to itself from the age of Bismarck and the Hohenzollerns, and even of Marx and Bebel, and that that national equation needs to be allowed for in any summation of results.

But on the other hand the endeavour to show that the Kingdom of God is out of harmony with the idea of the Divine Fatherhood seems to me equally one-sided. The fact that both ideas were so frequently expressed by Jesus cannot be adequately explained on the supposition that His use of the former term was a mere accommodation to Jewish prejudices, and, as it belongs mainly to the earlier part of His ministry, is to be regarded as the husk needful then to protect the spiritual heart of His teaching, but speedily to be discarded as no longer necessary. If we are free to treat an idea which formed so constant a theme of our Lord's teaching through the greater part of His ministry after this fashion I do not see where the process is to end. Why not, with Loisy, extend the process a little further, and reduce the entire historic teaching of our

Lord to a prelude of the real drama of the Church and the Councils.

Before we can justify the need for so free a handling of our Lord's teaching, we must be more fully satisfied of the real irreconcilability of the Idea of the Kingdom with the Idea of the Fatherhood of God. The true social correlative of the Idea of the Fatherhood of God is, it is said, the Family. A kingdom connotes coercion, earthly sway, and so on, and is totally incongruous with the Idea of a Father; but a Family connotes freedom, personal intimacy and love.

But surely the difficulty arises from pressing the letter of a great metaphor with altogether undue rigour. Christ certainly meant something distinctive and real by the term Kingdom; but it does not follow that we must read into His use of the word the whole associations which attach to the Kingdoms of space and time. If we treated the Ideas of the Fatherhood and Family of God with a similar mechanical rigour, would we not be compelled to exclude altogether the Idea of Mediation? Where in modern family life do we find anything precisely equivalent to the place of Jesus as Mediator of the filial life in the Family of God? Yet we who hold that both the Fatherhood of God and Mediation of the filial life through Jesus Christ are integral elements in His teaching do not find any real incompatibility

between the two Ideas, because we recognize that the analogy, while true in all essential points, must not be pressed to an absolute similarity of details. We, therefore, do not set the two ideas in barren and unnatural opposition, but we combine them, and from their combination reach, as we believe, a more adequate conception of the riches of the spiritual reality.

A similar course should be followed with regard to the two Ideas of the Fatherhood and Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God of which Jesus speaks is the Kingdom of the Father, a phrase which He Himself uses in a way which precludes the thought that He saw anything incongruous in the two Ideas. The Kingdom is throughout in every detail a Kingdom of the Father *as Jesus conceived Him.*

But why, it may be said, if this is so, should we not simply use the natural term, the Family of God ? First of all, because it is not the historic term, which was selected by Jesus, in full view of all the facts, to describe the peculiar nature of the Society which He founded. Secondly, because this is no mere literalism ; because the historic term, when understood in the light of the Fatherhood of God, brings out more fully, than the other can do to modern men, the vastness, complexity, and richness of the new spiritual order, which is slowly organizing itself in the world.

The Idea of a present spiritual Kingdom actually existent in the world is so strange to many that when it is brought before them they find it difficult to grasp. They are familiar with the Idea of the Visible Church, or with the Idea of the Invisible Church, or with the vaguer Idea of a Christendom; but the Idea which underlies and embraces them all in a richer unity, the Idea of a Kingdom of God, is grasped with clearness and firmness as yet by comparatively few.

But let us be in earnest with the two principles of the Divine Fatherhood and of Christ as the Mediator of the New Life, and let us think out consistently what these imply.

If they are true, they imply that there is now in the world a vast multitude of human beings, separated by every conceivable difference of race, language, and varying type of economic and social life, rank, wealth and sex, who yet are all united to God through faith in His Son, and who are endeavouring to realize that filial life in their own homes, and also in the social, economic and political spheres in which their fortunes are cast. They are a great multitude, but they are something more than an aggregate of human units. The fundamental, immanent law of their life is that they are being drawn into increasing conformity to their type, the type being the Son of God. "Separate as the billows, they are one as

the sea." They are controlled by one Will, which pursues one supreme End, and, in so far as they are faithful to the inspiration and guidance of their Head, they are all seeking a common goal. Consider the immense variety of their separate callings. From the meanest drudge to the greatest monarch they are, in so far as they are Christians, seeking each in his own place to do the will of their Father Who is in Heaven, and to secure that the Spirit of Jesus shall be objectively realized in the lives of those around them, and also that that spirit shall be embodied in the customs, institutions, laws, and entire life of the Societies in which by God's Providence they live.

We have here, I submit, something much more than an aggregate of believing individuals, something very much wider than any "visible Church," or organization of men and women for specifically religious purposes, something richer and vaster even than can be fittingly described by the term "invisible Church"; we have a nascent world-commonwealth. When we think of all that this great common life implies, the myriads of human beings controlled by one Will, the incalculably varied influences radiating from their lives, which are constantly finding expression in objective customs, institutions, laws and literatures, philosophies and arts, when we think at once of the unity of the entire life and its infinite variety, we

can see the appropriateness of the name "the Kingdom of God," and the need for some such spacious metaphor to describe the reality actually present even now in the world, and are constrained to feel that even the term "Family of God" is inadequate to bring out the full content of the reality.

When we say that we have here a nascent world-commonwealth, we are not using the language of poetry and symbol, but of simple fact. The Kingdom of God is even now in the world. The immense confusions of Christendom, its deep divisions, the innumerable ways in which the peculiar life of the Christian is bound up with the life of the world, all tend to obscure that which justifies us in speaking of it as a Kingdom, its unity in Christ Jesus. Even so, to take an illustration from Modern History, it seemed mere dreaming when, in the earlier part of last century, men arose in Germany and Italy who asserted the principle of nationality, and declared that there could be no peace until these two races had attained full consciousness and realization of their true genius in distinct national organizations. Matter-of-fact people looked on such prophets of nationality as mere fanatics and dreamers. The true realities to them were the Bourbon and Papal states, and the innumerable Kingdoms and Principali-

ties of Germany. Had they not the Monarchs, and the Courts, and the Armies, and the Treasuries, and all the real weights and forces on their side? But the prophets of Nationality saw deeper. Behind the minor differences they saw the real unity of spirit of their respective races, and discerned in this the slumbering force of Revolution and Regeneration. We know now who best gauged the real situation, and how the day came when, South of the Alps, barriers vanished, and dynasties toppled and fell, and armies refused to shoot, and a handful of volunteers overthrew a coalition of states; and how, in Northern Europe, Saxon and Bavarian, and Prussian, forgetting ancient enmities and wrongs, crossed the Rhine as brothers in arms, and how thus a new Italy and a new Germany sprang into being.

Such commonwealths, however much they may have owed to their practical statesmen, and to "blood and iron," could never have come into being but for the intellectual and moral forces which, in truth, created them. Unity of spirit came first, and unity of form afterward. What is it, in fact, which renders any society possible, which prevents the centrifugal forces of selfishness from breaking it up into its constituent elements? It is a common interest and a common aim. It is the presence of this common interest and aim, wherever Christian life exists, that make the true

Christian society, that constitute it as a Kingdom of God. It is here, I believe, in this nascent world-commonwealth that we find the true centre of Nature and of History, here that we see the purpose of God culminating. All roads of Nature, Providence and Grace converge at last on this Mother City of the Soul. It is true that the great majority, even of those who are real "children of the Kingdom," have but the dimmest consciousness of their community of interest and of aim with all others, and that each is labouring away at his own vocation in only a partial consciousness of its intimate correlation with all other Christian vocations in one stupendous whole of Life and Aim. But, whether consciously or unconsciously, that common Life goes on organizing itself out of the world. What its ultimate outward form may be we cannot tell. Revelation presents the climax to us under the veil of symbolic imagery alone. Christ, it says, will come again in glory and power, "the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ will come," "the new Jerusalem will descend out of Heaven from God."

But whatever view we take of that great world-climax, the long result of Time will realize all that is best in Human Life. The spirit of it will be that of an ideal Family, and yet in vastness and variety of social life it will be like a Kingdom. We must hold fast to both conceptions if we wish

to be true to the teaching of Jesus. On the one hand, the Kingdom of God is a great family of sons and daughters, in which, in every detail, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man are perfectly realized. On the other hand, there will be room and necessity in that society for the legislator, the statesman, the economist, the artist, the man of Science, and the philosopher, as well as for the prophet—room for every type of man, woman and child who can aid in developing and realizing its life by active or passive faithfulness to its Head. A society of this nature is surely better described by the historic term "Kingdom of God," than by that which those who have protested against it have suggested as a substitute.

But the protest may have been needed, and it will be justified by its results, if we learn from it, with renewed conviction, that the only adequate conception of the Kingdom of God is that it is the Kingdom of "our Father, which is in Heaven."

JESUS AND THE NEW LIFE

Chapter III

JESUS AND THE NEW LIFE

THE interpretation of the Personality of Jesus is the storm-centre of the Theological controversy of the present day, as it was of the first Christian centuries. Almost everything in our construction of Christian thought, it is felt, depends on the foundation on which we build, and the sense of the importance of this primordial problem has given rise to many theories of that Personality. But, broadly regarded, all these theories may be grouped in one or other of two classes. One of these we may, without further hesitation, call the Humanitarian; the other, for want of a better name, we may call the Transcendent. By that latter name I mean to indicate the theory that underlies both the great traditional views of Sacerdotalism and Evangelicalism, using the latter term in the broad sense in which it is used on the Continent. At the heart of Evangelicalism and Sacerdotalism alike there lies the conviction that, negatively, the Personality of

Jesus is inexplicable in terms of ordinary human and historical life alone ; and, positively, that in Him in a unique fashion God has drawn nearer to men, and through Him has established new relations with them which are as truly unique as is the Personality of His Son. This great common ground of traditional interpretation of the Personality of Jesus will, I trust, define itself more clearly as we proceed with the study of our problem.

The Humanitarian view is familiar to all who are acquainted with the general culture of the age, for it has at present the *Zeitgeist* on its side. It teaches that Jesus Christ is simply the summit spirit of Humanity, the highest interpreter of the great unchanging, spiritual environment of the soul, and of the laws of that soul itself. Such an interpreter may be compared with a discoverer in natural science. A scientific discoverer penetrates more deeply into the vast Cosmos than his predecessors, but he does not change that environing world by one iota ; he simply explains it. The order which he expounds was always there, the tangle and confusion were simply in the mind of man, and the total effect of the scientific discoverer is upon that struggling human mind alone. His task is to bring thought into juster and truer relations with the unchanging environment.

It is after this fashion, and perhaps, to some extent, unconsciously under the influence of this analogy, that our age tends to conceive of all the great moral and spiritual teachers of the race. On this view they are, one and all, simply pioneer discoverers of the unchanging and inviolable spiritual ground and order of the world. All the change which such spiritual teachers stand for and effect is within the souls of men. By the action of such teachers the human soul and the social organism become more intimately adapted to the standing spiritual order, or are brought into closer fellowship with its mysterious Source. Where that Source is conceived as personal and free, this general view is in two respects modified.

First, as a human character rises under the influence of religion, God is conceived of as meeting the advance with answering approval and increasing love, and, in this mediate fashion, the great religious teacher may be viewed as effecting a change in the spiritual environment of the soul.

There is, of course, great variety of standpoint within the general Humanitarian view, as there is also within the Transcendent. The right wing of the former approaches the left wing of the latter. The beautiful Eirenicon with which Dr. Drummond closes the series of " Hibbert lectures," and some things which Dr. Martineau has said in his later controversial writings, approximate to certain

forms of the Transcendent view. None the less the distinction between Christ as simply Interpreter, and Christ as Interpreter and Mediator; between Christ as simply Revealer of new Truth, and Christ as "God Manifest in the flesh," seems to me deep and vital.

Or, second, the Humanitarian Theist, like Dr. Martineau, may say that all human discovery in the moral and spiritual sphere is due to Divine Revelation, which is conditioned by, and is proportional to, the moral progress of the seer. God's Revelation lies round every man, he would say, like a besieging sea. Human aspiration, prayer, and striving, lift the sluices and let the ocean in. It is at this point that Humanitarianism approaches nearest to the Traditional view, but it does so, it appears to me, at the expense of taking up elements alien to its true genius; for if we admit the presence of a transcendent, intervening Divine Agency coming in from without into the individual life at all, we are already in principle carried beyond the modern world-view, with its rooted objection to miracle, and its conception of everything human as explicable in terms of evolution and uniformity. Yet Dr. Martineau is at one with other Humanitarians in denying that Christ is anything more than the supreme interpreter of the one uniform spiritual Environment and of Him Who is its Source, the highest of the great

series of Founders of Religion, the man who has been led farthest up the mount of vision into the zone of morning light.

Such in outline is the Humanitarian explanation of the Personality of Jesus Christ.

The question now immediately before us is this: Does the theory afford an adequate explanation of the primitive Christian consciousness, or of the self-consciousness of Christ, as we may reach these by fair use of the Epistles and the Gospels?

It is clearly, to a great extent, out of harmony with the every-day Christian life and thought of the Churches as we know them. It is true that Humanitarianism, in its Theistic form, has much in common with such teaching and life. It shares with them their belief in the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, the Law of Self-Sacrifice for the Common Good, and the Immortality of the Soul. But there is one element, at least, in the Traditional teaching, which it is unable to assimilate, and that is what it believes to be an exaggerated estimate of the Personality of Jesus. In his famous *Address to Divinity Students*, in the year 1838, Emerson gave striking expression to this revolt. "In this point of view," he says, referring to the Divine Nature of the human soul, "we become very sensible of the first defect of historical Christianity. His-

torical Christianity has fallen into the error that corrupts all attempts to communicate religion. As it appears to us, and as it has appeared for centuries, it is not the doctrine of the soul, but an exaggeration of the personal, the positive, the ritual. It has dwelt, it dwells, with noxious exaggeration about the Person of Jesus. The soul knows no persons. It invites every man to expand to the full circle of the universe, and will have no preferences but those of spontaneous love. But by this Eastern monarchy of a Christianity, which indolence and fear have built, the friend of man is made the injurer of man. The manner in which his name is surrounded with expressions which once were sallies of admiration and love, but are now petrified into official titles, kills all generous sympathy and liking."

Through many pages of this brilliant address Emerson reiterates his thought with a force of expression which shows how profound was his revolt alike from the orthodoxy and from the Unitarianism of his day, which at that time, in this respect, stood much closer to orthodoxy than is at present the case.

Now, as a simple historical fact, it cannot be denied that that element in Christian thought, against which Emerson protests as foreign to its true genius, dates back from a very early period in its story. We can go back at once to the first

Christian centuries, and say of their controversies and creeds, as of their devotional writings and hymns and ritual, that, from his point of view, they " dwell with noxious exaggeration about the Person of Jesus." There is not one of the centuries, not the simplest and earliest, to which this criticism does not apply, not one of them in which the Humanitarian view could live and move within the Church without a painful sense of oppression and rebellion.

Still further, if we pass back from the ages of Christological discussion and creed-making into the vital and genetic period of Christianity, the age of the New Testament Epistles, we find that the same thing is true here also. Scientific exegesis has long ago broken down the earlier Humanitarian endeavour to prove itself in line with Apostolic Christianity. It is true, of course, that we find in the Epistles no such clear dogmatic expositions as we find in the Nicene, Athanasian, and Chalcedonian Creeds. What we do find, however, is that these Epistles everywhere express and suggest those questions which the creeds answer in terms of the philosophic thought of their time. It is absolutely incontestable and indubitable that, from Emerson's point of view, the Apostolic writings " dwell with noxious exaggeration about the Person of Jesus." Their thought is, indeed, always circling around this theme, returning to it

ever and again and, Antaeus-like, deriving new strength and boldness from its return to its ground. It does not, in fact, appear as if this element were a "noxious" and alien ingredient of their thought at all, but rather as if it were something primitive and vital.

We carry our inquiry a stage further therefore, and pass up into that mysterious *annus mirabilis* of Christianity, in which such mighty spiritual forces were awakening in obscurity and silence, and whose records are found in the Gospels. Do these records sustain Emerson's protest? Is the Jesus whom they depict such as Humanitarians believe Him to be? Up to a certain point we may gladly admit that He is, and that they have done the common cause invaluable service by bringing this human element into new light and prominence. This is the great and conspicuous service that Humanitarianism has rendered to historical Christianity. Its protest has been needed as an element in the thought of Christendom, and as a "re-agent" its services have been invaluable. But as its contribution has been made and absorbed, it has, to my thinking, become increasingly clear that this Humanitarian solution is far too bare and simple to account for the Personality of Jesus Christ.

On that view, as we have seen, He is simply an interpreter of the standing spiritual order, a

prophet of the great truths of the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, and the Law of Love. Now if such be His sole function, plainly the only fitting attitude on His part must be to use every resource of the teacher to make these priceless truths luminous to His disciples, and then to stand back and let their light shine upon them.

We recognize that this is the true attitude of the man of Science, in proclaiming the truths which he has discovered. Why is it that we feel that the whole story of the discovery of the Origin of Species is so honourable to both Wallace and Darwin? Is it not just because there was no petty and self-assertive wrangling between the two great thinkers as to priority of discovery. We feel that here there was a moral greatness shown that befitted the greatness of the occasion. We feel that this is the true tone of Science, that it should be so impressed by the greatness and majesty of truth that there shall be no place for personal claims. So, too, it is a note of moral greatness in practical affairs, when for some great cause a man is willing to be despised and forgotten.

A recent writer has put the matter admirably[1]: "There are qualities, such as hypocrisy,

[1] Dr. Forrest's *The Christ of History and Experience*, p. 57, First Edition.

altogether irreconcilable with virtue, destructive of it in every sense ; there are others, and obstrusive self-appreciation is one, irreconcilable with the highest virtue. We are thrilled by Danton's cry, 'Que mon nom soit flétri, que la France soit libre' ; 'Let my name be blighted : let France be free' ; because it strikes the note of self-forgetfulness. Whether genuine for him or not, we say, 'that is the tone in which men should speak : this indifference to personal interest, this absorption in the service of a cause.'"

Not otherwise is it with the great moral and religious teachers of human history. Who can imagine Socrates making his own personality the centre of his teaching ? He has too shrewd a measure of his own limitations ; and, I may add, too keen a sense of humour to be guilty of such a moral lapse. Yet how mighty was the personal influence that came to him unsought. He is, in this respect, a hero of the true Humanitarian type. It is a figure of this kind, but with a deeper insight and more tender sympathy, that Humanitarians wish to find in the Gospels. So, too, the dying Buddha said [1] to his disciple, ere he passed away to his Nirvana : "It may be, Ananda, that in some of you the thought may arise : 'The words of our Teacher are ended ; we have lost our Master.' But it is not thus. The truths and the

[1] Monier Williams' *Buddhism.*

rules of the Order which I have taught and preached, let these be your teacher when I am gone." The personality had passed away for ever into Nirvana, but the truth remained.

It may be said, however, that the man of Science and the Prophet are not on the same level as regards their power of enforcing the truths which it is their mission to proclaim. The man of Science can summon to his aid the accepted principles of logic, and can force conviction on every open mind by argument and evidence. But the prophet moves in a different sphere. He gains his new truth, not by reasoning, by which he can convince others, but by insight, which cannot be imparted by any logical process to his followers. Hence, unlike the man of Science, he must speak authoritatively, must use the full weight of his life and personality, in forcing his truth home on dull and unenlightened hearts.

The distinction is a true one. We may readily admit that the spiritual teacher must speak with an authority that would be unnecessary and unbecoming in a teacher of Science. He is the spokesman of an imperative law, and his message is not simply to the intelligence but to the conscience of his hearers. Now, in both the cases just cited, the case of Socrates and that of Gautama, these teachers, it may fairly be said, were as much akin to the man of Science as to the Prophet.

The Athenian sage believed that all sin was due to ignorance, and that the truths which he taught were to be learned by dialectic. The Buddha also taught that evil was due to illusion, and his life-work, as viewed by him, was not so much the taking away of guilt as the dispelling of misery by the destruction of illusion.

A closer analogy, in this particular respect, to Jesus, it may further be argued, lies before us in the Founder of Islam, who made the truth of the Unity of God a burning and a shining reality for the Arab races by making his own Personality the centre and rallying point of their faith. The first article of the creed of Islam, "There is no God but God," has become a great force in the world only because of the second, "Mohammed is the prophet of God." That is true. There is unquestionably in the soul of man something, too, which hails the thought, not only of new, but of final revelation from God. This authority and finality Mohammed claimed. His career and the course of Islam, I believe, furnish the most striking example of the thesis that no man, however spiritually enlightened beyond his contemporaries, has the right to put his own personality forward between God and His truth and the Soul. It is, however, necessary to define strictly the limits of the personal self-assertion of the Founder of Islam. He never claimed to be more than the

last and greatest of the prophets; he never dreamed of asserting his own sinlessness; his dying cry was for pardon; in a word his claims are far lower than those which, according to the Gospels, were made by Jesus, who declared that he who was but little in the Kingdom of God was greater than the greatest of the Prophets, Who said that He would return again as Judge of all flesh, and Who instituted a memorial feast to perpetuate the idea that His Blood was "shed for the remission of sins," and to keep His own Personality living in the memory of His followers.

Yet, attenuated as were the claims of Mohammed in comparison with those of Jesus, history has demonstrated that they were far in advance of his rights. The curse of Islam to-day is that it is so chained to its founder. It reproduces him only too faithfully in its polygamy, its intolerant cruelty, its insatiable love of power. That he raised the world around him to a higher level is, indeed, true; but the tragedy of the later history is that the world has moved beyond that level and that Islam cannot move with it, because its prophet's self-assertion has bound his followers not only to the great and high truths which he received from God, but to the evil survivals from the past, which were also elements in his complex personality. So, too, this excess of self-assertion is the key to the moral self-deterioration of

Mohammed himself, as well as to the corruptions of his religion.

The gift of prophecy is the noblest of God's gifts, but it is also the most dangerous. The man to whom is granted a new vision of Divine truth is privileged beyond the other sons of men, but he is safe only so long as he realizes in every fibre of his nature that he is nothing, and that God is all. The moment that pride because of his privilege creeps into his heart, the moment that the *ego* asserts itself unduly, in that moment the soul's tragedy begins. The clue to the strange paradoxes of Mohammed's nature, his early struggles for virtue and religious reform, and his growing self-indulgence, his humane and generous disposition and his astounding cruelty, lies here. It is the story of the progressive ruin of a soul through pride. "When once he dared to usurp the name of the Most High as the seal and authority of his own words and actions, the germ was laid from which were developed the perilous inconsistences of his later life." [1]

For the true type of the Spiritual interpreter we must look elsewhere. What is the noblest type of the purely human teacher of religious truth, the true attitude of the most enlightened human spirit to whom God has granted a fresh

[1] Sir W. Muir's *Mohammed*, p. 507. Third Edition, 1896.

vision of Himself, of His Purposes, and of Human Duty? How should such men bear themselves towards their fellows? What should be their self estimate, their bearing towards God?

We have an answer to these questions in the great phenomenon of Hebrew Prophecy. We may say that historical criticism, like the archangel's spear, heals the wounds which it has made; for modern study of the Scriptures, by focussing attention on the prophets in the Old Testament and on the Personality of Jesus in the New, has given us a better understanding of the profound difference between them. As we study the writings of the prophets, we see with perfect clearness that while they speak with authority in the name of God, that authority has clearly defined limits which are never crossed. They claim only to be interpreters of the Divine Order of the world, and of the Divine Nature in which that Order inheres. In the light of this insight they interpret the past, they forecast the future, and they mark out the true line of present action. But their claim to authority is limited solely to the specific message which they believe themselves commissioned to deliver; they never go beyond this, they never dream of making their own personalities authoritative, and therefore mediatorial, or of asserting finality for the revelation which they bring. Rather does each of them re-

joice in being only one of a great series of revealers of the Divine Will. He is one of the prophetic order. He receives the prophetic tradition, adds his share, and hands it on to the next whom God may raise up to explain His unfolding counsel to His people. No one who is familiar with the writings of the prophets can fail to be impressed with the clear distinction which they draw between themselves and the Divine Message. With pathetic humility they confess themselves to be "men of unclean lips," weak, erring, sinful men, to whom God has committed a revelation, terrible and glorious, which they must proclaim.

There is here a profound difference between the Prophet of Islam and the Prophets of Israel. Mohammed founded a spiritual tyranny, personal and autocratic to the core ; the Hebrew prophets stand forth as the interpreters and statesmen of the great theocracy, who are all summoned by Jehovah to do their part in their day and generation, and then to disappear, leaving the work to other hands. Who can imagine an Isaiah or a Jeremiah desiring like Mohammed to leave his name to be a battle cry of faith ? The prophets are nobly above all such personal claims. They are too absorbed in the terror and splendour of the Divine Counsel to dream of intruding their own personalities between God and man. The note of each prophet is, " Let my name be blighted,

but let Israel be holy." They are, one and all, inspired by the spirit of the prayer of Moses: "O, this people have sinned a great sin . . . Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin . . . and, if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." It is this absorption in the Divine Will, and self-forgetfulness in presence of what is greater than they, that give them their peculiar moral grandeur. Contrasting thus the prophetic attitude with that of Mohammed we cannot fail to discern its superior nobility. We are sure that this is the true temper in which men should speak of things so great. It marks the very utmost limit to which the tone of religious authority can lawfully go in any merely human teacher, however spiritually enlightened he may be. If we believe that the prophetic message was true, we shall also believe that they did not pass that limit. They had a Divine Message to fulfil, they fulfilled it, and then gladly and humbly laid down their burden. Such is the ideal attitude for the religious teacher.

Now the contrast between the attitude of Jesus and that of the prophets is the more remarkable when we remember that it was on the prophetic literature that His own soul was nurtured. We can see from the extant records of His teaching how deeply imbued His mind was with the peculiar thought of the prophets, how frequent are

His allusions to their very language. His ideals of God and of true human life were largely formed under their influence. That they were for Him the greatest among the sons of men is shown, moreover, by the unique place among those sons of men which He gave to the only one among those contemporaries whom we can say that He actually *admired*—the great Baptist. In the Baptist He saw the old prophecy resurgent in its noblest form. To Him those prophets were the *élite* of their nation, the men who expressed its very genius and soul. Had Jesus, then, been in His own view one of the great series of prophets, which when all is said is what the Humanitarian theory demands, we should assuredly have found in Him the same spiritual note that we find in them: "Let my name be blighted, but let Israel be holy."

But, unless the Gospels give us a wholly misleading account of Him, that is certainly not the case. They represent Him as saying, in the most explicit way, that the Baptist is much more than a prophet because he is the forerunner of Himself, and, further, that the least among His followers is greater than John. They show Him constantly saying things about Himself which far outstrip the claims of Mohammed, or of any of the great founders of religion, habitually assuming that faith in Himself, and not simply

in His particular teachings, is the necessary condition of the New Life in His followers, and that unbelief in Him is the great sin of His people. They show Him asserting the right to forgive sins, and finally predicting His own return in glory and power to control the world and to judge all nations. The Four Gospels, in fact, are full of this element. It is either expressed or implied throughout almost the whole teaching of Jesus.

If these records are faithful, then it is incontestable and indubitable that Jesus, on Emerson's view of Him, does dwell with "noxious exaggeration" about his own Personality. If He said the things about Himself which they report Him to have said, if He assumed the spiritual attitude to His disciples which they represent Him to have assumed, it is not surprising, nay, it was inevitable, that Christian life and thought should have taken the course which we know them to have taken and which Humanitarianism deplores. But obviously, if it be so, the appeal which Emerson makes from the Churches to Jesus is no longer possible, and we must hold Him responsible for an overweening estimate of Himself and an abnormal self-assertion which have wrought disastrous results in the spiritual life of mankind. But a conclusion so radical as this is irreconcilable with the general impression which

the Personality of Jesus makes upon every morally enlightened mind. This is in truth the great difficulty of Humanitarianism, and we have now to consider the way in which it has been met.

Plainly, the line of least resistance is to question the accuracy of the records.

First of all, it is quite clear that the strategic necessities of the case demand the negation of the historical accuracy of the Fourth Gospel. To enter here upon any adequate discussion of that great and intricate question is, of course, impossible. I shall not use the witness of the Fourth Gospel in developing the argument of these chapters, simply because considerations of space forbid. I believe it, however, to be an apostolic source, and to give a true picture of the inner life of Jesus. But, leaving that great and difficult question on one side, let us ask this other: Can the character and teachings of Jesus, as they are pictured in the Synoptic Gospels, be brought within the limits of the Humanitarian theory?

It will not to-day be questioned that if these records are to be taken as they stand, the Personality of Jesus cannot be so explained. But the minute analytic criticism of the Gospels, which has sifted them line by line, which has decomposed and recomposed them a hundred times—that work of analysis of the sources which was an essential preliminary to the rejuvenescence of Theology—

has to some extent made obsolete the old proof-text method of using isolated passages to demonstrate what Jesus said and thought. It is always possible, to-day at least, to bring a battery of critical authorities to bear upon any particular saying in the Gospels, to prove either that it is capable of two meanings, or that it has been altered in translation from Aramaic into Greek, or that its absence from the "Logia" or "Ur-Marcus" makes it "suspicious," or that the Evangelist had some preconceived idea which led him to misunderstand the meaning of Jesus. The critical movement in fact has raised such a whirl of dust that some find it very difficult to see anything distinctly at all, and one very eminent scholar has reached the conclusion that we can be certain only of some half-dozen sayings of our Lord, these sayings being selected on the principle that, inasmuch as they seem to go clean against the traditional view of His Personality, they could not have been invented, and must therefore be original. Hence it is always open to an objector, at the present moment, to make out a possible case against almost any particular saying which seems to tell decisively against his theory. In answering him one may be able to establish only a counter probability, and in the stress of a multitude of such discussions the cumulative weight of a great number of probabilities is apt to be forgotten.

But there is one way, at least, of bringing the whole question as to the self-assertion of Jesus to a clear issue. What was His relation to the Messianic hope of His land and time? Did He believe Himself to be the Messiah? Did He make that claim? If He did make that claim what did it necessarily imply?

I venture to think that the question here raised is of far greater importance than is even yet generally recognized. It is now more than half a century since the historical genius of Baur detected and gave emphasis to the great part which the Messianic idea has played in the development of Christian doctrine. In his masterly survey of the causes which led to the growth of the new world-religion, he gives it due prominence. He dwells, first, on that side of the teaching of Jesus in which the Humanitarian finds its essence, the interpretative element, which is concerned with truths about God and the soul. He then proceeds as follows :—

"And yet had Christianity been nothing more than such a doctrine of religion and morality as we have been describing, what would it have amounted to, and what would have come of it? True though it be when we regard Christianity in this aspect, that it comprised and summed up those pure and simple truths which utter themselves in man's moral and religious conscious-

ness, and that it opened up these truths to the common mind in the plainest and most popular style, yet more than this was needed.

"A form was needed for the religious life to grow up in as a concrete structure. A firm centre was required around which the circle of its disciples might rally, so as to grow into a fellowship which should be able to win dominion over he world. When we consider the way in which Christianity grew up, it is plain that it could have had no place nor significance in history but for the Person of its Founder. How soon must all the true and weighty precepts of Christianity have been numbered with the words spoken by many a friend of humanity and philosophic sage of ancient times, had not its doctrines been made words of Eternal Life in the mouth of its Founder.

"But we cannot help asking, with regard to the person of Jesus, what is to be conceived as the secret of the importance it has attained for the whole of the world's history? However powerful we may conceive His personal influence to have been, it must have acted from a certain point or fulcrum supplied by the circumstances of the place and time. Without this it could not have produced that effect on the mind of the age which enabled the work and influence of an individual to set on foot a movement so extensive and so profound, and exercising such an

influence on the whole life of mankind. Here then is the point where Christianity and Judaism belong to each other so closely, that the former can only be understood in the light of its connexion with the latter. To put it shortly, had not the Messianic Idea, the Idea in which Jewish hopes had their profoundest expression, fixed itself on the person of Jesus, and caused Him to be regarded as the Messiah, who had come for the redemption of His people, and in whom the promise to the fathers was fulfilled, the belief in Him could never have had a power of such far-reaching influence in history." [1]

That Baur is right in thus emphasizing the immense importance of the Messianic element in the historical development of Christianity seems to me certain. It was this that made the new religion from the first not primarily a philosophy, or an ethic, or even a system of spiritual truths, but a living religion with power over the masses of men.

It is now recognized on all hands that in this identification of Jesus with the Christ there is found the taproot of Christian doctrine. It is, to vary the figure, the element in the life of Christianity which has from the first led it into different ways of thought from those in which

[1] *The First Three Christian Centuries*, vol. i. p. 37, English Edition.

Humanitarianism finds itself at home, which has made it, not simply a new teaching, but a religion of mediation, a religion which, in Emerson's view, "dwells with noxious exaggeration about the person of Jesus." Baur's contention is undoubtedly the true one. Somehow or other, primitive Christianity had become possessed by the conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, and out of this came the peculiar faith and life and thought of the Christian Church.

But we cannot, of course, stop short at this point. We must ask how the Apostolic Church became so possessed by this conviction. Did the Apostles at this critical point understand or misunderstand Jesus? The progress of historical inquiry is gradually bringing this question into increasing prominence, and it will, I believe, become perfectly clear that this is no secondary question to be lightly slurred over, but that the answer to it is of absolutely vital moment for the true interpretation of His character. Its importance lies here. We have seen that in the Synoptic Gospels there are many reported sayings of Jesus which, as they stand, clearly indicate that He assumed a place in the spiritual order inconsistent with the Humanitarian reading of His Personality. These may be attacked in detail, their historical authority questioned and their apparent force weakened. But it will all

be of little avail if Jesus actually declared Himself to be the Messiah, for, if He were capable of doing this, He was also capable of saying these other startling things. They belong to the same type of self-judgment, and form, with it, a coherent and definite whole. It is therefore inconsistent to object to these sayings on the one hand, on *à priori* moral grounds, and at the same time to accept the fact that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah—a latent inconsistency which seems to me to run through a very large part of modern Humanitarian criticism of the Gospels, and which the prolonged and minute investigation of the period which has been going on for more than half a century is slowly but remorselessly bringing to light.

To Dr. Martineau, in England, belongs the credit of having first discerned the cardinal importance of the question; and in his book on *The Seat of Authority in Religion* we find, with all its historical shortcomings, the most thoroughgoing endeavour to deliver Humanitarianism from its dilemma. His solution is simple and drastic. He fully admits that the Apostles accord to Christ a place incompatible with the Humanitarian solution, and would, I suppose, have no quarrel with the statement that they "dwell with noxious exaggeration about the person of Jesus." But he accounts

for all this by regarding it as a Jewish survival. Just as the earlier Brahminism lived on beneath the surface in primitive Buddhism, and worked itself to the surface in the apotheosis of the Buddha, so, I suppose, he would picture to himself the survival of Messianic and Apocalyptic ideas in the Gospels and Epistles. But he carries the same principle much further. He finds the same phenomenon in the Synoptic Gospels to a much greater extent than modern Criticism, as a whole, has been prepared to admit. Messianic beliefs, he says, were in the air. There was a positive Messianic obsession in the minds of the disciples and Evangelists. They would have it that Jesus was the Messiah in spite of all that He could do to prevent them from falling a prey to so hateful a delusion. Thus the Evangelists are wont to pervert the simplest sayings and deeds of Jesus, with perfect honesty, no doubt, but with entire inaccuracy, none the less. Jesus Himself never claimed to be Messiah, but shrank with repugnance from the thought. Of that Dr. Martineau is certain. He did not claim to be the Christ, because He was not the Christ, and a man of the greatness and nobility of Jesus could not claim to be greater than He was, or than man could be.

Inspired by this conviction, Dr. Martineau goes through the Synoptic narratives, having disposed

of the Fourth Gospel after another fashion, and reconstructs their narrative in his own way. The most stubborn facts yield to the *élan* of his analysis, and disclose the most unexpected meanings. The confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi, "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God," with Christ's reply, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven," becomes, through an ingenious use of Mark's account, a rash assertion by Peter of his faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and a stern repudiation of the title on the part of Jesus: "Silence, you are never to say such a thing!"

The Triumphal Entry is dissolved into an accident of travel. The wearied Jesus finishes His journey to Jerusalem by riding into the city on an ass, while the blinded multitude read into the incident an ancient prophecy and hail Him King. As for the many incidents and sayings recorded in the Synoptic Gospels which imply an authority more than human, they are, one and all, read back into the life of Jesus by the disciples and Evangelists.

As we read the confident and brilliant pages of the venerable writer our interest in his argument gradually fades. The whole adventure, we feel, is too desperate to have any practical result. He has decided the matter on other

grounds than those of criticism. Our interest therefore passes from the subject-matter to the writer, and we ask, How has he come to hold this determining conviction? What was it which forced this strong and high-minded thinker, to whom our age owes so much, into a position so singular? For the facts groan and cry out under such treatment. We feel that by such methods almost anything could be proved. We may fairly say that the assertion that Jesus never claimed to be Messiah is to-day one of the eccentricities of criticism. That claim has, of course, been denied by others than Martineau, but by very few. There is almost no fact of the Gospel history that has not been so denied, but that Harnack's verdict—"This part of the Evangelic tradition seems to me to stand the test of the most minute investigation,"[1] a verdict which he has reiterated in even more decisive form in his later work,[2]—is the true one does not seem to me to admit of reasonable doubt.

[1] *History of Dogma* (Eng. Trans., vol. i. p. 63, note 3).

[2] "This already brings us to the other designation which He gave of Himself, the Messiah. Before I attempt to explain it, I ought to mention that some scholars of note—and among them Wellhausen—have expressed a doubt whether Jesus described Himself as the Messiah. In that doubt I cannot concur. Nay, I think that it is only by wrenching what the Evangelists tell us off its hinges, that the opinion can be maintained. The very expression, Son of Man—that Jesus used it is

But Martineau's argument, unconvincing as it may be, has a very peculiar interest. How did he find himself in such a position that it was needful for him to cut his way with such desperate trenchancy through the documents, and through the greatly preponderant judgment of even his critical allies? There is an extremely interesting series of letters in his recently published *Life and Correspondence* which throws much light on this psychological problem. As I think that it lays bare the real stringency of the Humanitarian dilemma, I shall quote from it in some detail.

In a summary of certain unpublished lectures, delivered between 1840 and 1845, Dr. Martineau is represented as always assuming that Jesus

beyond question—seems to me intelligible only in a Messianic sense. To say nothing of anything else, such a story as that of Christ's Entry into Jerusalem would have to be simply expunged if the theory is to be maintained that He did not consider Himself to be the promised Messiah, and also desire to be accepted as such. Moreover, the forms in which Jesus expressed what He felt about His own consciousness and His Vocation become quite incomprehensible, unless they are taken as the outcome of the Messianic Idea. Finally, the positive arguments which are advanced in support of the theory are either so very weak, or else so highly questionable, that we may remain quite sure that Jesus called Himself the Messiah."—"*What is Christianity?*" English Translation of "*Das Wesen des Christenthums*," pp. 130, 131.

was the Messiah, and as believing that He so represented Himself to His disciples.[1] Later,[2] in a review of F. W. Newman's *Phases of Faith*, (1850), we find that he has abandoned his own view that Jesus was the Messiah, while he retains the conviction that Jesus Himself believed it. He now shares his friend's views on both these points. But he is grieved at the conclusions detrimental to the character of Jesus which Newman draws. "It was not without personal pain," says his biographer, "that Mr. Martineau observed the destructive character of the conclusions which Mr. Newman had reached. Their main divergence was in their estimate of the character and historical position of Christ. To the end of his life Mr. Martineau retained the profoundest veneration for Christ and the attitude of a disciple towards him, and though he has been accused of 'destructive criticism,' his aim was always to destroy the lower in order to preserve the higher, and by a just historical method to clear away the accretions which obscured or distorted that grand and unique personality."

How then did Martineau, in this second phase of his thought, deal with Newman's attack on the character of Christ? He argues that "such

[1] *Life*, vol. i. p. 171. [2] *Life*, vol. i. p. 212.

fallibility in matters of intellectual and literary interest, as every theory must allow which leaves to the inspired prophet any human faculties at all, or any means of contact with his age and nation," is compatible with a true revelation of God through a morally perfect character. On this ground, his biographer says: "It was maintained by him that, though the claim to be the expected Jewish Messiah had no basis in reality, it was not indicative of any moral imperfection, for due allowance must be made for the vague and ambiguous meaning of the word 'Messiah' . . . and if Jesus never positively denied the political functions of the Messiah, an infallible moral perception detained Him from every tendency to realize them."

In a later review of a new edition of *Phases of Faith*, in reply to Newman's continued assertion that there was an undeniably arrogant tone in Christ's Messianic claims, "Mr. Martineau," says his biographer, "accepted in part the answer that Christ had all these preogatives, and that it was only truth and reason to claim them." Plainly his mind was not at rest on the subject, and the leaven of Newman's criticisms was at work, for his biographer continues: "He qualified this acceptance by the statement of his conviction that the present Gospels exhibit this oracular and Messianic character of Christ's

teaching in great excess of the reality." But he was unable to remain content with this position of unstable equilibrium. Nearly forty years later, in a letter to Mrs. Humphry Ward, about a paper which she had written on "New Forms of Christianity," we have the final result of his life-thought. He says [1]:—

"The inner life of Jesus will not, I fear, work the sequel as you describe it. The supposed pretension to the Messiahship breaks the identity and changes the whole moral attitude and relations of the personality. His message hitherto had been that the time was at hand for the kingdom of righteousness on earth, to which, in common with His compatriots, He devoutly looked; He stood in regard to it on the same platform with them, and took it home to Himself, while delivering it to them, marking His fellowship by sharing with them the baptism of repentance. Now by a sudden transformation He appears in the character of the King, the secret being revealed at the same moment to Himself and to Peter, and allowed to break out and rend the air of the approaches to Jerusalem.

"This total change of function, this leap upon a throne, with legions of angels at command, and sentences of irrevocable destiny to pass, it is impossible to make continuous with the char-

[1] *Life*, vol. ii. pp. 240, 241.

acter of the Galilean man of God. His message then was one of self-abnegation; now it is turned into one of self-proclamation, a claim and not a service. And that claim, if really made by Him to others, must carry in it what they understand by it—the coming in the clouds of Heaven, the downfall of the kingdoms of the earth, and all the scene-shifting of the 'last days.' And all these elements of the contemporary Messianic belief are attributed to Him by the same Evangelists, who make Him appropriate the Messianic office at all. They must, in my judgment, either all be taken or all be left . . . I quite agree with you in referring the sentences of self-assertion ascribed to Jesus to the moulding influence of the disciples' belief. But what higher degree of self-assertion can there be than self-identification with the Messiah?"

This letter, every word of which deserves to be weighed, is simply a summary of the argument expanded in much greater detail in the volume on *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, published two years earlier. In that book we find Dr. Martineau's whole view of the development of Apostolic thought wrought out with a vigour and a rigour that disclose his sense of the gravity of the position. We find that he has come thoroughly over at last to F. W. Newman's view that, if the Synoptic narratives are trust-

worthy, no possible defence of the character of Jesus on this point can be made. He must in that case be deemed guilty of overweening self-assertion, of irritation, of unpleasing self-consciousness, of "dwelling with noxious exaggeration about His own personality." But having granted this, Dr. Martineau now pursues an altogether different course from that of Mr. Newman. The character of Jesus has made too profound an impression upon him for Mr. Newman's conclusions to be open to him. It was impossible for one of his lofty spiritual genius to be satisfied with the conclusion that contented the somewhat narrow and acrimonious spirit of his friend.

We cannot, for instance, imagine Dr. Martineau saying that Fletcher of Madeley was a more perfect character than Jesus.[1] On the other hand, his intellect was too penetrating not to see that the admission of Christ's own faith in His Messiahship involved either such a moral revolt as Newman's, or the acceptance of such a view of the Founder of Christianity as would lift Him above the ordinary historical categories, and make Him something more than a mere teacher of new truths about God and the Moral Order. Either He must change the fundamental theoretic view of Humanitarianism, or he must hold Christ

[1] *Phases of Faith*, p. 210. Edition, 1850.

guilty of an arrogance and self-delusion that would lower Him from His place in the hearts of men, or he must cut his way through the documents.

Dr. Martineau was unable to face either the first or the second of these alternatives, and so he adventured on the task of explaining the Gospel history afresh. I have quoted these passages at length because they seem to me to lay bare the real heart of the whole problem discussed in these pages. The progress of criticism is bringing us face to face with Dr. Martineau's difficulty. If we cannot rank him high among critics, we may gladly accord him a very high place among the thinkers who can work truths out to their conclusions and see how they are interrelated, and an even higher rank among those fewer and rarer spirits who are gifted with moral and spiritual insight. That he saw the true issues as few among the Humanitarians of to-day see them, I believe as certainly as that he chose the wrong way out of the entanglement. His clear perception of the moral supremacy of Christ, and his equally clear perception that the Messianic claim, however much it might be attenuated, was inconsistent with goodness of the purely human type, should have led him to widen his theoretic view of the world, rather than to do violence to history.

But are we right in laying so much stress on the view of even so eminent a religious thinker as Dr. Martineau? He asks the question: "What higher grade of self-assertion can there be than self-identification with the Messiah?" But was it not, in the peculiar circumstances of the age, a very natural error for a spirit so peculiarly gifted as that of Jesus? Are we not going too fast when we say that for Him to make such a claim either convicts Him of a spiritual crime against human liberty, or proves Him to be more than man? Have there not been many men who claimed to be the Messiahs of Judaism, and have there not been men in other religions like the Mahdis of Islam? Had not Palestine many false Messiahs in the age of our Lord? Yes, but it was one thing for a Barcochba to assume the office of a Messiah, another and a wholly different thing for Jesus of Nazareth. To the Zealot, the Messiah was a political and warlike figure, and any bold and fanatical adventurer who thought he could liberate his people might lay claim to the office, half-deceiving and half-deceived. There is no more mystery about such figures than there is about the Mahdis and Khalifas of our own day. History ranks none of them high, either in the moral or intellectual scale. But the truly extraordinary thing is that such claims to the obedience and religious devotion of His followers as the

Messianic claim implied should be made by Him who spoke the Sermon on the Mount and the parable of the Prodigal Son, to say nothing of the discourse which the Fourth Gospel, represents Him to have spoken in the Upper Room.

What, in its essence, was that Messianic Hope which the teaching of the prophets had created ? To these prophets the coming Messianic age was the goal of all God's ways with Israel and with the Gentiles. It was a cosmic event. It " completed the history of the world." It was due to the intervention of God working more gloriously in His world than ever before. It was a new epoch in the history of God as well as in the history of man. Sometimes this " one far-off divine event " was pictured by them as due to the immediate intervention of God, or at least nothing was said explicitly of the Messiah. Sometimes, on the other hand, the Divine grace and power were conceived of as mediated by the figure of a Personal Deliverer and Vicegerent of Jehovah. The saving and delivering Power of God was personalized and focussed in the figure of Him who was to come. The vagueness of this latter conception, its apparent wavering between earth and heaven, rendered it possible for narrow and earthly minds to vulgarize it, and to conceive of the Messiah as essentially a Warrior Prince. When the blessings of the Kingdom were con-

ceived to be secular prosperity, glory and power, the Messiah was naturally conceived of after the same fashion.

Now it is just with this rooted, secularized prejudice that we see Jesus struggling all through His earthly ministry. This is the key to the ambiguity and reticence of His earlier teaching as to His being the Christ. He had to make plain the real nature of the Kingdom before He declared Himself as King. That He did both seems to me luminously clear. Conceive the nature of the Kingdom as Jesus conceived it, and as He revealed it in the Sermon on the Mount. Think of the Revelation of the Father and of the Soul and its true life. Think of the profound spirituality of the whole. Eighteen centuries have added nothing to it. Its full realization is still far in advance of the highest human spirits. What are its blessings according to Jesus? The Forgiveness of sins, the Fatherly care of God, Communion with God, Brotherhood, Participation at last in the world victory of the Kingdom. It is the highest hope of the prophets spiritualized and extended; "he that is but little in it is greater" than the greatest of the prophets.

Now, for Christ to say that He is the Messiah of such a Kingdom as that is obviously a very different thing from the claim of a Barcochba to be the Messiah of a Kingdom of the sword. Little

more is implied in that claim than the power to fight and conquer by the favouring grace of God. But for Christ to associate Himself with the personalizing strain of the Old Testament hope, while at the same time He defines the Kingdom as He does in the "Sermon on the Mount," is, unquestionably, it seems to me, to declare Himself to be the Mediator of the Divine Life to the human race. What possible meaning can we attach to His Messianic claim, in the context of His teaching, but this? Can any one say what it does mean, if it does not mean this? It follows inevitably that among the virtues of the Kingdom —purity of heart, love to God, love to man, and the rest—we must place faith, love, and obedience toward Himself; in a word, the acceptance of Him as Saviour, and the owning of Him as Lord. When once we have reached that conclusion, and have thought out what Mediation and Finality really imply, we can see that nothing new and startling is added by the thought that He is Judge of all the earth. The claim to be Messiah and the strange isolated sayings which assert His unique place in the spiritual order fall together in a complete unity. They are parts of the same general view. We may, in fact, with confidence make Martineau's judgment our own: "What higher grade of self-assertion can there be than self-identification with the Messiah?"

It is clear, I think, that we have here the true roots of the " noxious exaggeration " with which, it is asserted, the Church has always thought of Jesus. He is, Himself, I believe, directly responsible for the peculiar cast of Christian life and thought. Christianity reproduces Him here as certainly as Islam reproduces Mohammed, and, on the bare Humanitarian view, the Christolatry of the Christian Church must be traced to the overweening self-estimate of its Founder, as surely as the polygamy and tyranny of Islam must be traced to the sins of its Prophet.

But are we, indeed, shut up to so repulsive a conclusion ? If Martineau's way out of the dilemma is impossible for us, is that of F. W. Newman any more possible ? That writer says frankly that we must recognize that Jesus had an overweening estimate of Himself, and that when that was touched He was irritable and hard. Can that view be equated with what we otherwise know of the character and teaching of Jesus ? Of that every earnest man must form his own conclusions from the study of the Gospels. The first disciples were put in practically the same position as we are in this matter. We know the conclusions which they reached. They had such confidence in Jesus that they took Him at His word. The moral impression which He had made upon them was so profound that it

carried conviction with it as to the truth of His Messianic claim. I am content to make the same profession. The total impression which Jesus makes upon the human soul seems to me overwhelming, and Newman's solution preposterous.

It is only the total impression which can carry conviction; but one point may be referred to separately. Every student of comparative ethics knows the peculiar emphasis which Christian morality lays upon the self-suppressing virtues. A new virtue appears in the classical heathen world with the new religion—the virtue of humility. This quality of patience, gentleness, self-repression, lowliness, true magnanimity, is essential to the Christian type, and of it the Apostolical writers habitually adduce Jesus as the great Example. The case for it is indeed stated by Jesus Himself with a vividness which causes the greatest difficulty to many minds, because it seems to them unpractical and overdriven. Now this is surely not the type of ethical teaching which could ever come from a character of the kind which Newman describes. There must be something radically wrong with a construction which leads to such results as these. What is it then which is wrong? What is the initial error which leads to the critical violences of Martineau and the moral contradictions of his friend. It is the postulate with which they both start; it is

the fundamental theory of Humanitarianism, the theory which assumes that Jesus can be explained by the same principles as explain Zoroaster, or Gautama, or Mohammed; that, like them, He is simply a great Interpreter, a Revealer of new truths about the unchanging spiritual environment of the soul.

We are shut up, I believe, to another explanation of the facts. If the Humanitarian view be the true one, if Jesus be simply a man, like the founders of the other great world-religions, then authority of the kind which He asserted would indeed be spiritual tyranny, a tyranny traceable to His overweening estimate of Himself. But the Transcendent theory starts from different premises. It holds that the personality of Jesus was absolutely unique, and, therefore, that the analogy between Him and the other founders of religions, while valid and illuminating up to a certain point, is inadequate. The founding of the Kingdom of God, to those who hold this view, is not simply a historical development, but a great Cosmic Event, which finds a partial analogy in the first appearing of organic life in the physical realm, or the emergence of self-conscious human life in the animal world. The Apostle Paul, indeed, goes further and compares it to a new creation.

On this view the Personality of Jesus is essen

tially that of the Mediator of the New Life. Let us for the moment and for the argument suppose that His personality is of this unique kind. Let us suppose that faith in Him, acceptance of His authority, the whole personal element of love, trust, reverence, obedience, really initiated His disciples into a higher and nobler life of communion with God, a life which at every point was increased and maintained in proportion to the maintenance and increase of the personal relation with Himself; let us suppose that the spiritual universe was actually so ordered by God; would it not then be His bounden duty, His Divine vocation, to make this momentous spiritual fact plain and clear to men? If so, how could He better do it than by following just such a course of action as the Gospels represent Him to have followed? On such a view the paradox between His self-assertion and His humility would disappear. He might with perfect consistency say, "All things are delivered unto Me of my Father," and in the same breath, "I am meek and lowly of heart."

On the view thus provisionally suggested we can illustrate the solution of the paradox from human life. Take the case of a monarch, who by the historical traditions and the institutional structure of a nation represents its national life; or a president, who by common

consent is the representative of a great commonwealth. Such a man may in spirit be humble and self-forgetful, but none the less, under the sense of historic vocation, he may assert and maintain his rightful place, and refuse to tolerate any usurping or presumptuous rivalry which would disable him from doing the work with which the nation has entrusted him, or wrong the honour of the people through its representative head. Yet St. Louis on his throne, or Lincoln in his Cabinet, may in essential spirit be a humbler man than the ragged beggar at his gates. The self-assertion of the ruler may spring from arrogance, but it may also spring from self-denying love for his people, and a clear perception that its welfare depends on the maintenance of social order, an order to which his own vocation is necessary and vital. Self-assertion in itself is not a vice. It may be a heroic virtue. Everything depends upon its motive, and whether or no it has Reality behind it.

The explanation which the theory of Transcendence gives of the self-assertion of Jesus is that there was Reality behind it, and that Jesus followed the course which He did follow because it was His Divine Vocation, the only way in which He could adequately reveal His Father's will and redeem the souls of men. It is here, I believe, that the only adequate solution of the problem is

to be found. It is only if we grant the unique and peculiar Personality and Relations to God and Man of Jesus Christ, that we can understand the picture given by the Gospel records and harmonize their apparent contradictions.

But is this provisional supposition of the absolute uniqueness of Jesus admissible? It is here that to-day the real heart of the problem lies, here in this *à priori* region that the Humanitarian view finds its chief support. It may be granted by those who accept that view that it has many difficulties, but these difficulties, it may be said, are quite outweighed by those of the Traditional view, with its metaphysical doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation, and its incredible ideas of the supernatural and the superhuman. There is something, they feel, in the Traditional view which is subtly alien to the world of thought in which they live, something incongruous with the modern mind. At best, they think, it is a faith which men may carry, but which, in our age, cannot carry them.

Now, in dealing with this difficulty, it is necessary, first of all, to narrow the question to the immediate issue. We are not directly concerned here with the traditional theology as represented by the great Catholic Creeds, but with what lies behind them, with the primordial religious intuition of the true meaning of Jesus, which the

creeds endeavoured to formulate and safeguard in terms of the thought and in face of the heresies of their age. It is true, no doubt, that if we make that intuition our own, we too shall be compelled to form a view of God and the World and the Soul in the light of it ; but that is a later stage with which we are not here directly concerned. We must begin with Religion before we go on to Theology, and here we are moving within the sphere of religious intuition.

Further, we are not here concerned with the question of Physical Miracle. That whole subject belongs, also, to a later stage of inquiry, and raises other questions than can be discussed within our present limits. The one question before us now has to do not with the physical realm of phenomena, energy and law, but with personality.

Can we justify the prejudice and even antipathy with which the modern mind seems to regard the idea of a unique and transcendent manifestation of God in Christ, and the mediation of a new Divine Life to mankind through Him, which makes the Gospel not simply a new interpretation of the standing facts and laws of the world, but a great Cosmic Event, the coming of God to His world after a new fashion ? It is probably safe to say that the great majority of those who reject the transcendent explanation of the Personality of Christ, if asked to give a clear explana-

tion of their reasons, would be unable to do so, and the same is, no doubt, true of those who do accept it. Belief and unbelief alike depend to a preponderant degree on the social and intellectual medium in which we live, and the degree to which we are or are not in sympathy with it. Hence, if asked to formulate their reasons for rejecting the Transcendent view, most Humanitarians would simply say that the modern mind instinctively rejected it. There is, as it were, a subconscious drift in their minds that carries them past it. They feel that the whole conception of a transcendent Christ emanated from an age which had a different view of the world from that which they have, a world in which it was easy to believe in miracle, in angelic visitants and evil spirits, in gifts of tongues and in audible voices of God. They believe that this prejudice in favour of the supernatural vitiates all testimony regarding Christ, that it is part of the personal equation to be allowed for when we are dealing with the Christian origins.

No doubt there is much truth in this view. But what they are apt to forget is that they themselves do not think in a vacuum ; that they, too, are influenced by the Time Spirit as certainly as the Galilean peasants, or the monks of the Thebaid, or the saint worshippers of the Middle Ages, and that there is a personal equation to be allowed for in the twentieth century as much as

in the first. It may surely be fairly questioned whether the Time Spirit of our own day—so far as we can judge of it by its practical manifestations in the economic, social and political spheres —is competent to discern the true essence of Christianity. Is it indeed so spiritual, so high-minded, so large in heart, so able to discern God to-day, as to warrant us in trusting blindly to its inspirations when it tells us that all thought of transcendence, of God manifesting Himself in a new fashion in Jesus Christ, is incredible? Is it not possible that in following the impulse of the Time Spirit we may be as blindly prejudiced as the most superstitious relic hunter or devotee? Surely, then, it is necessary to scrutinize the grounds of this prejudice, and to see how far they can be justified.

What then is the radical difficulty in accepting the view that the Personality of Jesus Christ contains an absolutely unique manifestation of God, that it stands for the initiation of a cosmic change, that its purpose is the mediation of a new life to men? The intellectual element in this bias of the Time Spirit, which many feel so powerfully, is derived, I believe, very largely from the reaction of scientific ideas upon our popular theories of the world.

In earlier ages it was the imposing fabric of the Church that exerted a certain hypnotic influence

upon human thought. Venerable as she was by virtue of her great achievements in the moralizing of mankind, and awful by her transcendent origin and the constantly renewed miracle of the Mass, her very presence in the world made it fatally easy to believe in miracle. Familiarity with this imposing reality supplied the interpretative categories which men needed for the explanation of anything wonderful.

To-day that great structure is, so far as the Western world is concerned, a ruin. The great palace of knowledge, which science has reared, has to a certain extent taken its place in the imagination of the modern world. Its majestic fabric is hypnotizing the modern mind much as did the Mass and the Church the mind of older days, and whereas men used to explain many of the phenomena of history with, it may be granted, fatal facility by the idea of miracle, they now endeavour to bring them all within the categories of natural law.

It will, of course, be at once objected that this is simply to say that a false method has been supplanted by a true. The answer is that while without doubt Science has come to stay, while it is true that this great body of thought will not disappear like that reared by the Schoolmen, it does not, therefore, follow that the prejudice against the transcendent in history is sound, even

although it has been generated by the influence of scientific ideas which are valid within their own domain.

What then is the source of that prejudice against the theory of the transcendence of Christ which I have outlined above ? I take it that its intellectual spring is something of this kind. The modern mind has been at work in the realm of Physical Science. It has learned there to look upon every unexplained and exceptional phenomenon as a challenge to thought, and to take no rest until it has rationalized such phenomena by bringing them under the uniformities of Natural Law, and, more particularly, within the sweep of the great law of Evolution. When it applies itself to history it naturally brings with it the temper, the methods and the ideals it has learned elsewhere. The fact of Christ baffles and harasses it, and it lays siege to it, just as it has laid siege to the unique and unexplained in the realm of Physical Nature. The success with which it has met in its endeavour to dissolve away the physically miraculous in other spheres of history encourages it to hope for similar success here also. Its whole endeavour is to bring the Personality of Christ into line with similar great religious personalities of history, and, minimizing the specific element in Him, to reduce the apparent difference in kind to one of mere degree, and so to compass the fact of Christ within the law of Evolution.

But this the theory of Transcendence can not admit, and hence the antagonism between the *Zeitgist* and that theory. The impulse to explain a challenging mystery is the motive, and the category of Evolution is the main instrument of the modern mind in this endeavour to effect in the sphere of history what has already been accomplished, it is believed, in the sphere of Physical Nature.

The story of the rise of Physical Science itself throws a curious and instructive light on the whole endeavour to bring the Christian origins within the score of Evolution.

The history of scientific thought proves that it is a natural tendency of the human mind to be hypnotized by a new scientific idea of the first magnitude, until that idea almost becomes an obsession. In time thought cures itself, Nature is found to be too rich for any single category, one *Zeitgeist* gives way to another, and the ingenious theological constructions and philosophies that had yielded to this passing hypnotism, and for a time had seemed so convincing and beautiful, because so up-to-date, become at last musty and old. No doubt, in the process, permanent results are won ; man has not spent his strength wholly for nought, but much time and pains have been wasted that might have been saved by a wise scepticism and caution.

In his *History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, a work of remarkable learning and ability, Dr. Merz has furnished abundant illustration of the way in which the mind of an age is apt to become, in this way, hypnotized by a new idea. It is like a child face to face with a treasure house of many locked chambers, into whose hands a key is given. He opens one door or, perhaps, two or three with it, revels in their riches for a while, and then, leaping to the conclusion that the same key will open them all, runs about, trying all the locks with it. In some cases, perhaps, he succeeds, but in others he only breaks the wards and delays the ultimate discovery. Dr. Merz shows in detail how, for instance, under the influence of Newton's great discovery, men vainly endeavoured to explain the molecular forces in terms of Gravitation, and how, in succession, the Atomic view of the world, the Kinetic, the Physical, the Vitalistic and other views of the world have each arisen in correction and supplement of one another, reality in each case proving greater than the specific theories, the richness of the concrete fact breaking up the abstract and partial theory.

It is a further illustration of this hypnotism that, as a recent able writer [1] has pointed out, the

[1] Rev. Dr. Oman, Kerr Lectures on *The Problem of Faith and Freedom.*

discovery of the Law of Gravitation exerted an influence on the entire thinking and literature of the eighteenth century very similar to that exerted by the Law of Evolution on the general thought of to-day. Dr. Merz confines himself to showing its reaction on Physical Science, but the influence of the conception may be traced upon the Theology and Poetry of the age as well, which tended to look upon the world as a great and ingenious piece of mechanism with God as its external Artificer, a form of thought which appears in the poetry of Pope and Addison and in Paley's *Evidences*, as well as in the *Système de la Nature*, and in other typical works of the age.

Now what the discovery of Gravitation was to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the discovery of Evolution has been to the nineteenth, and still is to the twentieth century. I have no doubt as to the grandeur and truth of the Principle of Evolution, any more than as to the grandeur and truth of the Principle of Gravitation; but now, as then, I cannot but think that the age is in danger of a like obsession. The glamour of Darwin's great discovery lies on our age as the glamour of that of Newton lay on the age of Paley and Pope and the Encyclopaedists. The key idea of Evolution has been extended from the organic realm to all physical and speculative and historical knowledge. That great results have been achieved by the use

of the new categories I believe, but that they are in any way adequate to the riches of life and personality seems to me sufficiently disproven. If Evolution be the sufficient category for the interpretation of Nature and Human Life, everything present in the later stages must have been implicitly contained in the earlier. The Christian origins on this view are no real Genesis. They are simply an Exodus. There is no new factor present, only a fresh turning of the ancient kaleidoscope of human wants and aspirations and dim intuitions. There is, at the utmost, merely a fresh adaptation of the great organism of human thought to its greater Environment, the Thought of God; no actual emergence of the Divine Will in the arena of human life, save in the sense in which every righteous human volition is an act of the Divine Will.

It is thus that the Time Spirit applies the idea of evolution to the religion of Christ in the same fashion as it does to all other religions. I have assumed above that there is nothing sacrosanct about this idea any more than there is about Gravitation. If it can explain the facts, good and well; if it cannot, or if it can only partially explain them, then we must simply seek a wider theory. The theory is only of use for the purpose of explaining the whole fact; the fact is not simply there to illustrate the theory, and to

be trimmed or discarded in so far as it will not lend itself to the purpose.

But we seem to stand in a different position relatively to the vaguer and auguster category of Uniformity. Is not this a veritable postulate of thought, and does not this idea of Uniformity exclude the very idea of any unique creative and mediatorial manifestation of God in Christ? It is plainly impossible within the limits of a discussion like this to go in any thorough and adequate fashion to the roots of this most important question. I shall only endeavour to show that, reasoning by analogy, there is nothing in the Transcendent view which is excluded by the principle in question.

The same use of the principle of Uniformity which would exclude the idea of the Transcendence of the Personality of Jesus would inevitably lead also to the most thoroughgoing Monism regarding the nature of Organic Life, and also regarding the origin of Self-conscious Mind.

It is not my intention here to discuss the vexed question of the origin of Life. The older theory of a specific vital force has for the most part gone out of fashion. Nevertheless, it is very generally admitted that Science has failed to show that vital phenomena are fully explicable in terms of their organic antecedents. There is something more in the vital result than was present in

its mechanical conditions. Mr. Spencer, in the last edition of the *Principles of Biology* (vol. i. p. 120), has explicitly recognized this. "We are obliged," he says, "to recognize that life in its essence cannot be conceived in physico-chemical terms. The required principle of activity which we found cannot be represented as an independent vital principle, we now find cannot be represented as a principle inherent in living matter. If, by assuming its inherence, we think the facts can be accounted for, we do but cheat ourselves with pseudo-ideas. It needs but to observe how even simple forms of existence are in their ultimate nature incomprehensible, to see that this most complex form of existence is, in a sense, doubly incomprehensible."

The physico-chemical factors, in short, mysterious though they may be, are inadequate to account for the mystery of life, and so a fresh draft is made upon the "Unknowable." But with what consistency can we use the Principle of Uniformity to exclude the possibility of the manifestation of the Divine Power in Christ, and relax it so far as to admit that there is that in organic life which cannot be accounted for in terms of its physico-chemical antecedents? Dr. Merz has devoted a masterly chapter of his *History of European thought in the Nineteenth Century* to summing up the Vitalistic contro-

versy, and has shown that while the older vitalism has gone out of fashion, a neo-vitalism has arisen in its place, which is advocated by many of the most conspicuous leaders in modern physical and biological science, men who are entirely unbiassed by any theological prejudice, a neo-vitalism which derives its strength from the conviction to which Mr. Spencer has given expression, that life "cannot be conceived in physico-chemical terms."

As regards the second point, the origin of Self-conscious Mind, we may take up a much stronger position. It is utterly impossible to explain psychic phenomena in terms of their physical conditions. With the emergence of these physical phenomena there arises, explain it how we may, something new, unique, unprecedented in the antecedent physical universe; something closely correlated, it is true, with the physical organization but distinct from it, and using it as organic to its life. The phenomena of Conscious Life stand to Matter and Force in a totally different relation from that in which one form of energy, for instance, stands to another. The form of Energy called Light may be transmuted into a quantitative equivalent of the form of Energy known as Heat, but there is and can be no such transmutation of Kinetic Energy into Consciousness. They are incomparables, and as Lotze has said: "On the recognition of this absolute

incomparability with one another of physical events and conscious states, has always rested the condition of the necessity of finding a special ground of explanation of psychic life."

It is equally certain that the unity of Self-consciousness in the personal life can never be derived from the multiplicity of sensation. The existence of the Self is the necessary presupposition of all thought. We can never build up knowledge out of sense ideas, any more than we can make ropes of sand. Comparison is of the essence of thought, and comparison implies a self-conscious mind distinct from the ideas which it relates and compares. Whether we can or cannot follow Transcendentalism in its higher flights, its analysis of knowledge seems to me once for all to have firmly established this, that human personality is inexplicable in terms of its physical antecendents. Something new has emerged on the arena, which uses the brain as organic to its own development, and which in this respect is analogous to what neo-vitalists find in the lower realm of organic life.

But it must, again, be pointed out that the rigorous use of the Principle of Uniformity would seem to exclude altogether the very supposition of such a new factor appearing within the closed Cosmos of the physical world. I am not, of course, arguing that the Uniformity of Nature, rightly

conceived, does so exclude it, but simply that the same use of the principle which would exclude the idea of an absolutely unique Mediatorial Personality in Jesus would also demand the rigorous exclusion of anything absolutely new in the first appearing of Human Personality. Here, let us suppose, is a man, who, studying the Christian Origins and the Personality of Jesus, reasons in this way: "This mysterious Personality cannot be qualitatively unique among the sons of men, for to suppose that He is, is to suppose something unprecedented, something that is discordant with the majestic uniformity of the Cosmos. The difference cannot be one of kind, it can only be one of degree; and everything, therefore, in the records of His life that seems to imply a deeper distinction must be due to the illusions of His disciples."

If we could imagine such an observer transferred back to the dawn of human history and watching the first glimmerings of self-conscious human life, we must suppose him reasoning thus: "There can be nothing absolutely new in this Being, the majestic Uniformities of Nature forbid it; the differences between him and other forms of life cannot be of kind, but only of degree." We must imagine him, perplexed and baffled by certain obstinate facts in the life of the new species, but always falling back on his formula,

and deriving from it new strength to explain away these new elements in terms of his too narrow and rigid world-view.

I submit, therefore, that such a view of the world as would exclude the Transcendent interpretation of the Personality of Christ is all too narrow for the riches of the concrete reality of things, and, if logically carried out, would result in a Monism of a very narrow and materialistic kind.

A wider and more adequate view of the great Cosmos must leave room for the emergence upon the arena of new manifestations of the Divine Power. When Mr. Spencer feels himself compelled to make fresh drafts upon "the Unknowable," we may surely claim the same right to appeal to Him whose nature we believe to be essentially self-revealing, because the knowledge of Him is Life and because He is Love. No doubt the passion for unity of thought is a legitimate and inextinguishable craving, but there are other interests even more vital. Lotze has put this principle in a pregnant sentence. "It is, doubtless, the interest of Science to group a multitude of different phenomena under a single principle, but yet the greater and more essential interest of all knowledge is no other than to trace back that which happens to the conditions on which it is really dependent, and the craving for

unity must give way to the recognition of a plurality of different sources, where the facts of experience do not entitle us to derive different things from one and the same origin." It is infinitely better to do justice to the concrete riches of the world than to cramp and maim human life in the strait jacket of a premature synthesis.

What we do seem to find, then, in reviewing the story of Nature and History is that there is in them something more than simply the evolution of the Immanent; that there are epochs that can only be called creative, marked by the emergence of new factors, which operate, according to laws of their own, within the great order of the world. In what has preceded I have used the appearance of organic and of psychical and self-conscious life as rebutting analogies which appear to me to negative that narrow use of the Principle of Uniformity which would make it, *à priori*, exclude the Transcendence of the Personality of Jesus, and the main conclusion which I draw from these is that there is no valid *à priori* objection to that theory of Transcendence.

But we may carry the argument a stage further. Supposing that there were to be a fresh manifestation of the Divine Power and Glory within the Cosmos the preceding analogies would lead us to suppose that it would appear within the sphere of

human Personality, that just as the Vital appeared in the Inorganic and the Sentient in the Vital, and the Self-conscious within the Sentient order, each higher form of existence making the lower organic to itself, and initiating a new kingdom of its own, so would such a forthputting of the Divine Power make human Personality organic to its ends, and initiate thereby a new and higher order of being.

I grant that such a positive use of the analogy must be made with great caution, and would lay by no means the same stress upon it as upon the negative side. God is not to be bound by precedent, and a new act of His creative power may well have laws of its own. Nevertheless, it is worthy of note that in all these three points the genesis of historical Christianity corresponds to these earlier epochs. By its own showing God has manifested Himself within the sphere of human Personality. He has done so after a new fashion by making a human Personality organic to His manifestation, and He has initiated thereby a new and higher order of humanity whose life principle it is to be "conformed to the image of His Son."

We return now to the central path of our argument from which for the time we have digressed. We have seen that on one supposition only can we make a clear and consistent picture of the Personality of Jesus. If that Personality was of an essentially Mediatorial character; if He was of

such a nature that faith in Him as the Saviour from sin and Lord of the conscience were necessary to the attainment of a higher life in God than was normally possible on any other terms, then it was clearly right that He should make that plain. Thus the moral difficulty of the self-assertion of Jesus entirely disappears. His whole spiritual attitude can, I believe, be simply and completely explained and justified on that view and on no other.

I have also endeavoured to show that the intellectual difficulty which the Time Spirit opposes to the acceptance of this explanation is unsubstantial, and that a larger view of Nature and History leads us rather to the recognition of an antecedent probability in the Transcendent solution.

We come now to the last part of our discussion. It is only from the standpoint of the Transcendent view that we can really understand, not only the Personality of Jesus, but the personality and religious development and thinking of the Apostles, and the peculiar spiritual note of the New Testament.

If we accept the Humanitarian view of Jesus, the really vital element in His work was His revelation of new religious and ethical truth, His doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of man, and the spirituality of true piety.

Had His disciples truly understood Him we should have found in their teaching simply a development and application of these principles, together with a grateful recognition of their Master, who had made them free of this nobler world. But that recognition of Him would have had a secondary place. Their interest would have been centred in the new truths, and their gratitude and love for the Master would have been derived from and dependent upon the vividness with which they apprehended these truths and in them lived. Most of all would this have been the case with that one among them who had never seen Jesus in the flesh, and had no personal, endearing memories of human companionship with Him.

But plainly that is no true description of the Epistles, and, least of all, of the Epistles of Paul. It has been frequently pointed out that, whereas in the Synoptic Gospels the Kingdom of God stands in the foreground of the teaching of Jesus, in the Apostolic writings its place is taken by His Personality, and that this is most of all the case in the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Instead of being a secondary and derivative interest, the Personality of Christ is ever in the foreground of the Epistles. True, the other element is there also, for in these writings there is a marvellous deepening and widening of spiritual outlook on God and the World and the Soul ; but the

thing which has prominence is the Personality of Christ. It is not from that radiant Cosmos that light streams back on Jesus, but it is from His shining Figure that Light streams upon God and the World and the Soul.

Now from the Humanitarian point of view, if Jesus had really succeeded in His work this would not have been the case. The really primary thing which He had to show was the mighty panorama of heavenly truth, and if He had truly succeeded, His own Figure would relatively to that have been in shadow. But, instead of that, we find a great proportion of the intellectual energy of the Epistles diverted into Christology. We find that the thinking of the New Testament cannot rest until it has determined the place and nature of Christ.

Dr. Martineau, as we have seen, has his own theory of Messianic obsession to account for this. But if he is right, why does the thinking of the New Testament not stop with the assertion that Jesus is the Christ? Why does the Apostolic mind rapidly journey through that phase as simply a stadium in its course, and advance, driven by some hidden impulse through other stadia thinking of the Lord, first as the second Adam, the source of a new humanity; and then, passing on through that phase again, conceive of His human life as the earthly manifestation of a

Pre-Existent Being, Who emptied Himself of His Divine Glory in the form of God; and then advancing through that once more reach its climax in the Johannine sayings, "The Word was God," "The Word became Flesh?" What we need, if all this is to become intelligible to us, is not simply the bare assertion that it was all lamentable illusion, the following of a false issue; we want to know the spiritual motive, the spur which drove thought along this great course to its goal.

The apotheosis of the Buddha is no real parallel. That did not begin till long after he was away; it arose on Pantheistic soil; it had every encouragement from the environment. But in the case of Apostolic Christianity we can see the process begin from the first without any gap as soon as Christ was away, and going on right against the very genius of Judaism, transmuting the strongest Monotheism the world has ever known.

Surely we need some more adequate reason to account for so powerful a movement of life and of thought than Messianic obsession, or than enthusiasm for a human teacher, whom the chief exponent of that movement never saw.

Further, the Humanitarian theory fails wholly to do justice to the peculiar spiritual "note" of the New Testament. That whole literature is inspired by the conviction, not simply that something new has been discovered, but that

something new has *happened.* The idea of the whole is not simply, "Now we know that the Jehovah of our Fathers is our Father in Heaven; now we know that the Gentile is our brother; now we know that all this heavy Pharisee code is an invention of man." All that new world of truth we do find in the Epistles, but we find much more than that, to ignore or minimize which is to miss their very genius. What is that constitutive element? It is that God in Christ has created a new spiritual environment. God has come forth from His eternity and has acted creatively in history, by initiating a new spiritual world-epoch through His Son. It is this conviction that gives to the New Testament the peculiar thrill of amazement which distinguishes it from all other literature, the tremor of awe which vibrates through all its pages. Take, for instance, such words as these: "Wherefore if any man be in Christ Jesus, there is a new creation; the old things are passed away, behold, they are become new." "But all things are of God, Who reconciled us to Himself, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation—to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning to them their trespasses." That is the dominant note of all the Epistles. The Apostolic thought roots itself in the conviction that "*God* was in Christ." That is the funda-

mental belief, in the light of which the Apostles think the world over again—the constitutive principle of their Theology and Morality. "What shall we, then, say to these things? If God be for us, who shall be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Such is the reasoning of Paul, and the author of the First Epistle of John says the same thing in other words, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

The historical fact of Christ interpreted by faith is the central secret of the New Testament. It is to the Apostles a great new Act of God, which constitutes a new world. Yet it is this peculiar note of the New Testament writings that the Humanitarian theory minimizes, or ignores, or treats as regrettable illusion. None the less, it is just this peculiar element which seems to me to lie at the very heart of the perennial moral and spiritual force of the Christian Gospel, and to form its dynamic and regenerating secret. Whether we hold that view or no, it is surely possible to ignore the fact that from the very outset of the Apostolic mission the Church was possessed by it, and that it is the ground view alike of the Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse. It is inwoven into the very texture of the entire life

of the primitive Church, alike into its faith, its theology, its morals, its literature and its polity. It is not accidental, but constitutive, essential, organic. That being so, we have to endeavour to give a more adequate historical account of how it came to hold so dominant a place in the life of the Apostolic community than the Humanitarian theory affords, and, in closing this prolonged study, I shall now endeavour to restate the Transcendent view in the light of what has been said.

The only adequate and satisfactory account, then, which we can give of the great movement of Christological thought, and of the peculiar *note* which we find in the New Testament writings, is that it was directly due to the deliberate and conscious action of the Founder of Christianity. It was part of His vocation as Mediator of a new Divine Life to man to set His disciples on the way which we see them following after His departure. Can we frame to ourselves from the records a coherent picture of the way in which the great conviction that lies at the root of the New Testament life took possession of the first disciples ?

Before the organization, and before the detailed Theology of the Christian religion, there came *Life*, a world of dim intuitions, of new judgments of value, of emotions, of spiritual aspiration. Here is the true protoplasm of Christianity, out of which,

in reaction with the environment, all the theologies, and all the ritual, and all the types of organization have sprung.

An essential element in that spiritual protoplasm, the experience of the first disciples, was their personal estimate of Jesus. It is the correlative of His self-assertion. It reached conscious expression in the Confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." It is this conclusion which, for good or evil, has made Christianity what, historically, it has been, not simply a system of truths and duties, but a religion of Mediation and Incarnation.

What were the forces which created that spiritual protoplasm? Let us narrow the question. What was it that led Peter to his confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God"? The remoter causes were many and complex, but one stands out clear above the rest. It was the total spiritual impression which Jesus had made upon him. There was one side of Jesus which every upright Jew could understand, the side to which Humanitarianism does full justice, the noble moral and spiritual teaching of the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables, the sanity, the largeness, the tenderness, and the grandeur of His thoughts on God and the World and the Soul. There was the entire consistency of His character with His teaching. There was the impression made by His

wonderful works. Close daily association with his Master had created in Peter's mind a reverent affection for and trust in Him, which made him capable of venturing upon Him when the Master led him into unknown regions.

The same faith which enabled Him to say, "If it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the water," made his spirit plastic to the influence of that other element in his Master's teaching, which has formed such an offence to Martineau and his friend. I doubt not that the same dilemma presented itself to him as to them, allowance being made for the difference between a Jew of the first age and a Humanitarian Theist of our own day. Out of that dilemma he chose another road: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." It was a "mortal spring" of faith across the chasm between the old world and the new, momentous far beyond what any of the disciples realized. Christ alone knew it, and met the confession with the startling answer, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter and on this Rock will I build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

As I read the story, Christ had been deliberately working to this end from the first, and He is, therefore, just as responsible for the form which

this spiritual protoplasm assumed in the Apostolic period, as the Creator of the physical protoplasm is for its necessary developments. The acceptance of Jesus as the Christ at once made Him the object of a religious veneration to which no mere man has the right. I do not, of course, mean that to a Jew of that day Messiah was equivalent to God Incarnate, nor do I hold that during our Lord's lifetime the disciples held the Nicene Creed. But I do hold that, taken in the spiritual context of Christ's teaching, this whole Christ-faith, by an inner logic led straight to the recognition of the central Idea of the New Testament, that *God* was in Christ.

Can we define more closely this vital and peculiar element in the spiritual consciousness of the first disciples? In what sense did they believe that He was Divine? Plainly, this was at first only in a very dim, half-conscious, rudimentary, and uncertain way. It was purely by way of intuition and not by way of dogma. The great spiritual truths rise always like the sun through the mist, or rather it is the mist of lingering sleep that clouds the morning eyes of the soul. But dim as was the first consciousness of the Apostles that God was in Christ, their tone is quite unmistakable. The way in which they speak of Him, especially after the resurrection, is qualitatively quite distinct from the way in which men talk even of the best

of men. It is not simply a question of proof texts; it is a question of *accent*, of spiritual attitude revealed by many things besides explicit sayings. They speak of Jesus with religious awe. They quote Old Testament sayings about Jehovah, and without hesitation apply them to Jesus. They represent " the great Intelligences fair " as casting their crowns before Him. They speak of " the throne of God and of the Lamb." There is in their spirits a cast and temper of thought which speedily finds even the Messianic idea wholly inadequate to their estimate of Jesus. It is difficult to define and specify this first Christian consciousness. It is religion as yet and not Theology, and when we are dealing with religious intuitions we must use symbol and picture and analogy rather than definition. Human nature is a harp of many strings. The glory and beauty of nature can set some of these chords vibrating, but they cannot awaken the chords of Love, for these need the touch of Humanity. But Humanity cannot awaken those higher notes, which sound only when the heart recognizes God. But explain it as we may, Jesus was able to touch those strings and call forth that heavenly melody.

Again, in our highest moments, we can discern God in Nature. Our senses are awake to the glory of colour and form and sound in Nature, but through all this sense imagery we discern the

excelling glory of the Eternal. In such moments men have felt that—

> The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
> Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
> Were all like workings of one mind, the features
> Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
> Characters of the great Apocalypse,
> The types and symbols of Eternity,
> Of first and last, and midst, and without end.

We are aware of the Presence of God in His world.

Again, when we are morally at our highest and clearest we discern God in Conscience. Analyze as we may its genesis and development, we know that this does not explain conscience any more than a description of the genesis and development of language explains the thought which lightens through it. We recognize the voice of God in its awful imperative with a certainty which makes light of all sophistry.

It is from such analogies that we can, perhaps, best understand the Apostolic consciousness. To the disciples Jesus was at first, perhaps, simply man. But as their knowledge of Him widened, and deepened, and cleared, the very endeavour to understand Him, to make a unity of their thoughts about Him, led them on to conclusions about Him that caused the spirit to thrill with awe and wonder, and yet with joy. They became aware of something mysterious and transcendent

in Him, something which was to the human lineaments of the Character what the Thought is to the Word. Behind and through Jesus they discerned—*God*, and that Vision it is which causes the strange thrill and glow of their later writings.

Consider what this discovery must have meant to these men. They had lived on terms of daily intimacy with Jesus. He knew each of them as a friend, had often named them by name, had intertwined Himself in the most intimate fashion with their lives. The growing conviction that "God was in Christ," which only acquired articulate and conscious form after His death, but which was implicit in the later stages of their human fellowship with Him, must have come with heartshaking power into their human intimacy. We can imagine what it would be to any one among us if God in articulate thunder named him by name. But such a summons, astounding as it would be, could only touch one moment of his life. It would be a poor thing compared with the discovery that God was incarnate in his dearest friend, for that discovery would touch the soul along the whole range of their common intercourse. That would be an incomparably richer thing than the most beautiful system of religious truth about God and about Duty. Above all, it would have an individualizing force about it that would make an altogether new life in God possible to him.

We may take an illustration from life to bring out the difference. I know a great man by reputation. I have read his speeches and writings, and I desire to know him personally. I learn that he is accessible, and, impelled by this desire, I seek him out, I make my way to his residence, I get past his menials, I meet him face to face, and I find him all that is friendly and courteous. But all that is morally possible on these terms is an interview and not a friendship. The more of common sense and fineness of perception that I have, the more must I fear that I am encroaching on his time, and intruding myself upon him, or at least outstaying my welcome. I carry the burden of our intercourse; there is a constraint in the interview; there can be no real friendship.

But suppose the contrary case. Suppose he comes seeking me, persists in that search, comes to my house and shows himself in earnest in the matter, and is patient of my ignorance and shortcomings, suppose, in a word, that he himself carries the burden of our friendship, then something richer than an interview is possible, namely true communion of spirit. Such is the underlying view of the New Testament Revelation: it is God "making Himself of no reputation, taking on Him the form of a servant, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

That is what is involved in the conviction of faith, that "*God* was in Christ"

That such a conviction has a kindling spiritual force about it will hardly be denied. The man who believes in it with all his heart will necessarily be conscious of a great arousal of the moral and spiritual energies. But if he is a man of living intellect, this elemental spiritual faith will raise a host of new questions in his mind. He will find the old world-view, in which he lived before this new conviction possessed him, no longer able to contain the riches of his new life, and he will set about the task of framing a world-view great enough to contain the new fact. He will endeavour to define more closely the mysterious Personality of Jesus, to set it in its true relation to God, to Nature, to the History of the Race, and to the Soul. It is here that we have the key to the intense Christological interest of the Epistles. It is no false track of thought in which their authors are travelling; they are simply taking up the necessary task of creating a new world of thought in which the grand and arousing conviction that God had manifested Himself to each of them after a new fashion in Jesus can find itself at home.

Here, then, are the religious conviction and motive which can alone adequately account for the Christological movement of the Apostolic

thought. They explain also what has been called above the distinctive *note* of the New Testament writings, the all-pervading sense that something new and amazing has happened. The Divine has appeared after a new fashion on the arena of history. The Christians of the first period do not speak and write simply like men standing in the shining track of a great pioneer discoverer in the realm of the Soul, who has penetrated further into its great unchanging Order; they rather speak and act, as Professor Denney has said, like "men awakening in a new and stupendous environment," an environment which renders a far freer and nobler life possible to them than was possible to their fathers. The closer analysis of what is implied in this idea of a changed environment would carry us further into a discussion of what is involved in the idea of Mediation than is here contemplated. All that is possible here is to call attention to the fact that the New Testament writers everywhere lay stress upon the fact that their new life rests upon something new which God has done. The Kingdom of God is to them a realm of grace within the moral and providential order of the world.

I have endeavoured to show, in the above argument, that we cannot adequately account for the Personality of Jesus Christ so long as we are content to explain Him by analogy with other great

founders of world-religion, and that we can only approximate to the truth about Him when we associate with that the further analogy of such a great cosmic change as the first appearance in the world of Self-conscious Mind. The Apostolic writers go even beyond this. They compare the appearing of Jesus to the creation of the world itself, and the rise of Christian life to a continuance of the creative fiat of God.

We may bring out this contrast between the Humanitarian and the Transcendent view by a final illustration. We know that there is at this moment a great city growing up close to the Arctic Circle, under conditions unprecedented in the history of the world. The dream of a new El Dorado is summoning to the Johannesburg of the Klondyke thousands of the most enterprising and adventurous youth of England and America. Great buildings are rising, streets and squares are being formed, municipal government is being organized and administered, and so long as the gold holds out everything that enterprise and ingenuity can do will be done to make human life free and active in the long winter night and amid the rigours of the Arctic frost. We may hear, ere long, of wonderful new discoveries in the art of supplying warmth and light to this daring outpost city of gold, and each will make life more tolerable to its inhabitants. None the less, however

great may be such discoveries in the standing physical order, the life of such a community must always be a straitened and impoverished thing, in strange contrast with the life of happier regions.

But suppose that something greater still were to happen, suppose that by some vast astronomical change the entire conditions were to be altered, and that, instead of the rigours of the Arctic zone, there came to the Klondyke the climate of the Riviera. Nature would be transfigured, the dark sea would become azure, the silent woods would ring with melody, the thick-ribbed ice and ancient snow would yield to the grass and flowers, and Humanity, feeling that a great load had been lifted, would leap up in victorious energy, in wonder and in joy.

Such is the change that comes over the spirit of the scene as we pass from the heathen moralists, or even from the prophets, to the New Testament writings. The environment of the soul has changed. God has manifested Himself anew as Father and Redeemer of men, a great load has been lifted from the conscience and the heart, and the spirit of man leaps in liberty and joy. It is only when we recognize the truth of this idea of a change in the environment that we can understand either the Personality of Jesus or the course of the life and thought of the Apostolic age; and it is, I believe, not due

to accident, but to necessities deeply seated in the nature of the soul, that in the strength of this faith the great historical victories of Christianity have been won.

JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD—APOCALYPSE AND ETHICS

Chapter IV

JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD—APOCALYPSE AND ETHICS

THERE is no subject which at the present time is more interesting to the critical student of the Gospels than the Messianic consciousness of Christ, and, more particularly, than that phase of it which is expressed in His teaching concerning His own Second Advent. It cannot be denied that the problems which it raises are very perplexing for ordinary Christian readers. Those who expect a literal and detailed fulfilment of the Apocalyptic predictions are comparatively few, and to those who have not the courage to do so they are what may be called a surd element in the teaching of Jesus, which cannot be explained in terms of the other ideas of our Lord, or satisfactorily rationalized in harmony with their general conception of Him. They cause similar perplexity to scholars, except to those negative critics who find the ethical teaching of Jesus so imperfect and His Personality so inconsiderable

that they are not surprised to find similar limitations in His predictions regarding His own return. The aim of this chapter is to show that the ethical and Apocalyptic elements in the teaching of Jesus are organically connected; that they are parts of a larger Idea; that neither can be understood apart from the other; but that when they are thus taken together, a large part of the difficulties of both disappear.

The problems of Christian Apocalypse have of late been attacked by several German scholars of assured and of rising reputation, with the new means of solution which the critical methods of our time, and the recent great advances in the knowledge of Jewish Apocalyptic, have furnished. These treatises, and the older discussions of the subject in France and in Germany, may, for the most part, be grouped into two classes by the contrasted views which they take of the individuality of Jesus.

Was He a deep-thinking and deep-feeling, but broad-minded and genial Teacher, who "saw life steadily and saw it whole"? Or was His individuality essentially of a fervid prophetic character, which found its spiritual sustenance in Jewish Apocalyptic hopes, and lived in exalted expectation of some great supernatural intervention of God in the affairs of men? Was He Sage or Prophet?

It is clear that the answer we give to these questions will determine the view which we take of the Apocalyptic element in the Gospels. Wellhausen [1] may be taken as typical of those who give the first answer, and who therefore are disposed to explain away the Parousia discourse. He seems to hold that these elements in the teaching of Jesus were really immaterial to His true mind, Jewish survivals which were so permeated and changed by His Spirit that they are of no permanent significance, like icebergs floating in a tropical sea. He believes, however, that these Judaic survivals in the mind of Jesus afforded points of contact with the current Jewish thinking, whereby there passed over from it into the current primitive Christian tradition and documents elements foreign to their true genius, such as the records of miraculous healing, and many of the details relating to Christ's Second Coming in glory and power. But the real Jesus, Wellhausen thinks, is to be found elsewhere, not in "the old garments of Judaism," but in His deep and beautiful sayings about love and life and duty and faith toward God. "He did not, indeed, place His own Personality in the centre of His teaching, He spoke not of the significance of His life and suffering. But as a matter of fact the impression made by His personality

[1] *Jüdische Geschichte.*

was deeper than that made by His teaching. He was more than a prophet ; in Him had the Word become flesh. . . . His speech is not the enthusiastic speech of the Prophets, but the quiet speech of the Wise. He gives expression only to what every upright soul must feel." This is substantially the view of Jesus which is taken by several scholars of an older generation. In its various forms it leans to the view that the Apocalyptic, and even the Messianic, element is a Jewish excrescence on the Gospels, or a Jewish survival in the Mind of Jesus, and therefore that it is of no permanent value for the Theology of to-day.

At the opposite pole from Wellhausen stand such recent writers as Baldensperger [1] and the younger Weiss,[2] who believe that the Apocalyptic element is the central and characteristic thing in the Personality of Jesus, and that His whole moral outlook is conditioned by that fact. Jesus in Weiss' view, is a " Pneumatiker " and " Ekstatiker " ; that is to say, a religious genius wrought to so high a pitch of enthusiasm that for Him the real almost vanishes before the Ideal, one so " God-intoxicated " that a great crisis of Divine Judgment and Deliverance seems to Him just at hand. In the presence of that great " Day

[1] *Das Selbstbewüsstseyn Jesu.*
[2] *Die Lehre Jesu vom Reiche Gottes.*

of the Lord," He is disposed to look coldly on existing social institutions, and even family ties. It is not well, He thinks, to be too much entangled in earthly things, when so mighty a change is impending. It is from this point of view that Weiss interprets the moral paradoxes of Christ's teaching: His injunctions to "hate" father and mother, to "let the dead bury their dead," to "turn the other cheek" and so on. Weiss takes these paradoxes with all the literalness of Tolstoy, but sets them in organic connexion with Christ's teaching of an impending crisis, and regards them as counsels of emergency.

There is, I think, something that is fresh and true in this view of the younger Weiss, though, with the "vigour and rigour" of a German specialist, he carries the idea to extremes. Strong in the conviction that Wellhausen's view does not do justice to all the truth, but ignores a large and stubborn class of facts, he develops the theory which I have above indicated with much acuteness and abundant detail. Neither of these two views, it appears to me, can be accepted as a whole, though both contain elements of truth. It is, on the one hand, mere critical violence to minimise, as Wellhausen practically does, the Apocalyptic element in the teaching of Jesus. This is common to the whole Synoptic tradition; it is not confined to the last great Parousia dis-

course, but is scattered through the earlier sayings; it is taken up in the Apostolic speeches and epistles, which assume an impending Parousia almost as a matter of course, and an entire book of the New Testament is devoted to giving it full expression.

But we can go further still. As we have seen, it is as nearly historically certain as anything can be that Jesus claimed to be Messiah. But if we admit this, then we cannot accept Wellhausen's view that "He did not place His own Personality in the centre of His teaching," a statement which is, moreover, at variance with a number of explicit statements even in the Synoptic Gospels. To make that Messianic claim in its context in His teaching was, as we have just seen, tantamount to making faith in and obedience to Himself a vital and necessary condition of entrance into the Kingdom of God. But, clearly, such a claim had far-reaching consequences. The Kingdom was destined to overcome the world. God was speedily to bring it to victory. Yet Jesus was about to die. He had been the Founder and Mediator of the Kingdom militant: was He to remain Mediator and Ruler of the Kingdom triumphant?

To that question, from the standpoint of our argument, only one answer is possible. The whole spirit and teaching of Jesus compel us to

believe that He must have made some such claims as the great Parousia discourse declares Him to have made—claims to be God's vicegerent in governing and in judging the world, and in bringing the Kingdom to victory. Had that discourse not been where it is, we should have been compelled to suppose that it had been given and lost, or that Jesus had been inconsistent with Himself. This, however, does not necessarily imply that the tradition of these Apocalyptic sayings, as we have it, is absolutely accurate, either in arrangement or in matter. But that, to view the state of the case broadly, Jesus predicted His own Coming in glory and in power appears to me certain.

But, on the other hand, the view of the younger Weiss, which makes the Apocalyptic parts of the teaching of Jesus the centre of gravity of the whole system, and looks upon Him as, in essence, a religious visionary, seems even further from the historical truth than Wellhausen's position. The picture of Jesus which the Synoptic Gospels give us (and it is these Gospels which are here alone in question) is not, broadly regarded, the picture of an ascetic visionary, who has drawn his religious inspiration from the Apocalyptic literature of Judaism. Wellhausen's vivid sketch is nearer the truth than this. As an able critic of Weiss has well said: "We cannot escape from the impression that, however much in this Man's life His

thoughts may soar towards the world beyond, nevertheless He lives it with incomparable directness and freshness in the present; that here we have a Figure for which we shall search in vain for a parallel in Judaism, a Figure which has firm ground beneath its feet." [1]

Weiss' whole argument breaks down, not only on the general impression which the character of Jesus leaves upon us, but also because its main position, that the Kingdom of God is for Jesus purely a Kingdom of the future, cannot be exegetically justified. The passages in which it is stated or implied that the Kingdom is already in Him present among men are too plain to be shaken by Weiss' arguments. In one sense it is, of course, true that the Kingdom has not come so long as it has not attained its full development and been able to show its true genius. It has two stadia, the Kingdom militant and the Kingdom triumphant, and therefore the disciple must needs pray, "Thy Kingdom come." It is this twofold aspect of the Kingdom that alone explains all the pasasges which refer to it, and the value of Weiss' work lies in the emphasis that he has given to the Transcendent and unrealized element which is the theme of the Parousia discourse, and is unduly minimised by writers of the Wellhausen school. But, taken as it stands,

[1] Bousset, *Jesu Predigt.*

his theory seems to me to do violence alike to the laws of interpretation and the facts of history.

Here, then, we have a new problem of the deepest interest. For more than half a century the fiercest lights of critical scholarship have beat upon that little handsbreadth of history that holds the human life of the Lord. The documents, the antiquities, the historical antecedents and consequents have been sifted a hundred times with all the ingenuity and patience and learning of three generations of modern scholarship. How is it then that two such competent scholars, starting apparently from similar theological premises, can reach such diametrically opposite views on what ought to be so plain a matter as the historical character of Jesus of Nazareth? Each of them reaches his results by concentrating his attention on one side of Christ's teaching, and by minimising and explaining away the essential features of the other side, a course which leaves them both in the difficulties above indicated. Does not the real error of both rest in the last issue on the same basis, a failure to apprehend the spiritual greatness of the Personality with which they are dealing. I am not thinking here of the theological theories of the nature of Christ, but simply of the historical individuality of Him who founded the Christian Church. That individuality, whatever theories

we may form of His Origin and Destiny, seems to me to have a much greater and richer genius than either of the critics referred to recognizes, and one therefore that baffles all their learning and subtlety when they attempt to explain it either as that of Prophet or Sage.

In our search for a First Cause of the great movement of Christian life and thought, we must go deeper and discover some principle of synthesis of those two elements in His teaching which we may call the Ethical and the Apocalyptic, and which by the methods of Weiss and Wellhausen it seems so impossible to harmonize. That principle, I believe, we shall find in a right understanding of the idea of the Kingdom of God.

But, before we go on to the further consideration of this principle, it may be well to approach it from another point of view. Humanitarian critics are in general disposed to find certain defects in the moral teaching of Jesus. While the highest admiration is expressed for that ethical teaching in general, it is found lacking in matters relating to civic and public duty. Perhaps the best statement of this view is to be found in a celebrated passage in Mr. Mill's essay on "Liberty." Referring, first, to the Christian morality as interpreted by the Catholic writers of the first five centuries and accepted with certain reservations by Protestants and moderns,

Mr. Mill, while recognizing its value, points out the deficiencies of its ideal. "Christian morality (so-called)," he says, "has all the characters of a reaction; it is in great part a protest against Paganism. Its ideal is negative rather than positive; passive rather than active; innocence rather than nobleness; abstinence from evil rather than energetic pursuit of the good. . . . And while in the morality of the best Pagan nations duty to the State holds even a disproportionate place, infringing on the just liberty of the individual, in purely Christian ethics that grand department of duty is scarcely noticed or acknowledged. . . . What little recognition the idea of obligation to the public obtains in modern morality is derived from Greek or Roman sources, not from Christian; as even in the morality of private life, whatever exists of magnanimity, high-mindedness, personal dignity, even the sense of honour, is derived from the purely human, not from the religious side of our education, and never could have grown out of a standard of ethics in which the only worth professedly recognized is that of obedience.

"I am as far as any one from pretending that these defects are necessarily inherent in the Christian ethics, or that the many requisites of a complete moral doctrine which it does not contain do not admit of being harmonized with it.

Far less would I insinuate this of the doctrines and precepts of Christ Himself. I believe that the sayings of Christ are all that I can see any evidence of their having been intended to be; that they are irreconcilable with nothing which a comprehensive morality requires; that everything which is excellent in ethics may be brought within them, with no greater violence to their language than has been done to it by all who have attempted to deduce from them any practical system of conduct whatever. But it is quite consistent with this to believe that they contain, and were meant to contain, only a part of the truth; that many essential elements of the highest morality are among the things which are not provided for in the recorded deliverances of the Founder of Christianity, and which have been entirely thrown aside in the system of ethics erected on the basis of these deliverances by the Christian Church.

"And this being so, I think it a great error to persist in attempting to find in the Christian doctrine that complete rule for our guidance which its author intended it to sanction and enforce, but only partially to provide. . . I believe that other ethics than any which can be evolved from purely Christian sources must exist side by side with Christian ethics to produce the moral regeneration of mankind; and that

the Christian system is no exception to the rule, that in an imperfect state of the human mind the interests of truth require a diversity of opinions."

I have quoted this very penetrating and carefully guarded criticism at full length because it is otherwise difficult to do it justice. Mr. Mill, it will be seen, distinguishes between the moral teaching of the Founder of Christianity and that of the Church, Catholic and Protestant. He finds the teaching of Jesus incomplete, but says that he finds no reason to believe that He meant it to be anything else; and finally states that, while this incomplete teaching is harmonious with "many essential elements of the highest morality," they cannot be derived from it, and must be sought from Pagan sources. The defect in historical Christian ethics, its want of insistence on public spirit, patriotism and the positive side of morals generally, is due, he concludes, to the failure on the part of Christian moralists to recognize that the moral teaching of Christ needs to be supplemented from other non-Christian sources.

There is, of course, much truth in what Mr. Mill has said, but how far we accept or reject his conclusions will be seen as we pursue the discussion.

Let us now turn from that high-minded and noble teacher, whom Mr. Gladstone happily

called " the Saint of Rationalisim," to the great Revolutionary Joseph Mazzini, of whom an able conservative theologian, Professor Denney, has truly said, " Mazzini is more like St. Paul in the completeness of his self-surrender and his magnificent faith in the future than any modern I know, and he has a far better right than most who have worn it to the much-abused title of prophet." What such a man has to say of the Christian morality must needs be very significant. Writing in exile, after the downfall of the Roman Republic in 1849, in an impassioned appeal to the priests of Italy, Mazzini appeals from the Pope to Jesus on behalf of the cause of progress and Humanity, claiming Him as on his side in a life spent in the interests of the collective life of mankind.

But, writing twenty years later, some years after the publication of Mr. Mill's treatise, he unhappily goes back upon himself and says: " Upon rereading the following pages I perceive that I went too far in asserting that the unity of earth and heaven was maintained in the doctrine of Jesus. The assertion will strike the reader as inconsistent with what I have elsewhere said of the actual inefficacy of Christianity to define our human mission, which I regard as the result of the germ of duality introduced into the doctrine by its Founder. Were I now to rewrite the article I should find some things to cancel and

much to add. . . . Jesus stood and stands alone, supreme over all other great religious reformers in everything that concerns the heart and the affections. But His intellectual grasp did not extend beyond the requirements of a single epoch. The great want of the epoch of which He was the initiator was the affirmation of human individuality, of the inviolability of conscience, the equality of all human souls, and of the possibility that each and all men should achieve their redemption and ascend to God.

"With regard to the problem of the means whereby redemption should be worked out, Jesus—placed between the Israelitish records and the impossibility, in that epoch, of arriving at a conception of the collective life of humanity, and therefore of a true conception of the Deity—remains uncertain, and below the height of the idea of which a glimpse has been revealed in our day. Starting from a conception of human life, founded upon human individuality only, it was impossible that He should reach the idea of God, the supreme Educator of humanity; of progress, by His decree the law of human life; of association, the slow but infallible method of that law's fulfilment; and of the harmony, resulting from such fulfilment between the terrestrial and the future life of humanity" (*Collected Essays*, English Edition, vol. v. p. 365).

A little consideration will show us that, allowing for the remarkable contrast between the two minds, we have here substantially the same criticism as that of Mill. Mazzini, intuitive, deductive, rapid, given to wide-reaching generalities, speaks of "humanity," of "progress" and of "collective life," and finds the Christian ethic deficient in its outlook on such matters; whereas Mill, inductive, cautious, infinitely patient, confines himself to the relations of the State to the individual, to public spirit and so on, and says that here the "Light of the World" gives no real guidance. But in principle the criticism is the same, and is directed against what may be called the Individualism of the Christian ethic, its lack of grasp of the collective aspects of human life, its want of social and international mission.

Is this criticism just? It is, at any rate, a very serious one. It ought not to be a matter of indifference to any Christian man that such men as these, men of so high a character and so noble a record—*animae naturaliter Christianae*—should have found the Christian morality lacking in a matter of such profound moment to our modern world. The whole movement of modern religious thought, as we have seen in the opening chapter of this volume, has flung us back upon the Jesus of History, so that we are brought squarely up to the problem whether or no His teaching takes

account of the realities of human life in its broader as well as in its narrower and deeper aspects. We cannot, I believe, evade the question by saying that on the matters of which Mill and Mazzini speak Jesus had no mind at all, because in His day these questions had not been raised, and that it is therefore an anachronism to seek from Him any pronouncement on such matters. As Mill has shown, these problems were urgent in ancient society long before the days of Jesus Christ, and that they were burning questions is obvious from the place which they have in the prophetic literature with which Jesus was so familiar. The Hebrew Prophets are profoundly interested in all social, national and international affairs, and in the moral and religious problems which these involve. They attach the utmost value to the continued existence of a noble type of human society, strong, beneficent, and enduring, a power in the living world of men. The modern social or civic reformer or patriot can have no fault to find in this matter with the Hebrew Prophets. But if this be so, clearly, we must in some way or other account for the comparative absence of such collective and national interests in the Christian morality.

Another way of accounting for the apparent gap in the Christian morality is to say that Jesus looked at life from the ascetic point of view, and

that He cared little about the earthly well-being of men. How is it then, we ask, that He wrought miracles for the healing of men's bodies? Every miracle is a proof that He is on the side of life and health and liberty. How is it, again, that wherever Christian influence has come the flame of philanthropy has burned high and clear? How is it that the whole impression that the Personality of Jesus makes on the unbiassed student of the Gospels is that here we have something far greater than any ascetic? Was it then that though He had the will and the heart to save men and to enrich and liberate their whole life, yet He had not the range and penetration of intelligence to see that the existence and health of human society depended on the exercise of the social and civic virtues? Surely we cannot credit Jesus Christ with a narrower range of intelligence than the Hebrew Prophets. Can we imagine Him reading those passages in the prophetical writings which speak of these virtues with tacit disapprobation as wisdom of this world? How, then, are we to account for His comparative silence on these matters?

Nor, again, can we evade the question by minimising the importance of those interests which Mill and Mazzini have so much at heart. They are vitally important to the human race,

whatever Pietistic religion may say. To-day, for example, when we read an ethical treatise, we expect reference to civic, social and industrial morality. When a new moral teacher appears we rightly expect him to have something to say, from the pulpit, or the platform or through the press, on the great matters of sociological import, international relations, labour, property, slavery and war. What is the reason for this? Experience has proved that while the springs of all moral progress are still to be found in the heart of the individual and the seclusion of the household, we cannot fully grapple with the task of bettering human life unless we are prepared to widen our view, so as to take in the whole range of the society of which the individual is an organic part.

In truth, the influence which Law, Custom and Institution exert upon the moral life of a people is very great. Take, for example, the part which slavery has played in the moral history of mankind. It originated, no doubt, in a very simple way, and for ages seemed to the civilized world as much part of the natural structure of civilized society as the present industrial order seems to most people. But in time the economic and moral evils of the institution became so glaring that it was felt to be an intolerable incubus upon society, and it has therefore been cast out by all

the progressive races. It reacted powerfully for evil upon the moral life of millions; it degraded the enslaving and the enslaved race alike, making the one arrogant and the other abject; it lowered the dignity of labour by associating it with the lot of the slave; it corrupted sexual morality; it formed, in short, so formidable a spring of moral corruption, and so gravely imperilled the most sacred interests, that at last one of the most practical races in history judged a terrible Civil War, which cost untold treasure and the lives of six hundred thousand of its sons, a cheap price to pay to be freed from its fatal influence.

The same principle—that laws and institutions are not matters external to the life of the soul; but react most powerfully upon it in moral and religious matters—might be proved and illustrated in a great variety of ways. No student of the social conditions which preceded the French Revolution, for example, can fail to find there the same lesson of the poisonous effects of an effete social and political order upon the entire moral life of a nation. In truth, the view that it is possible to separate absolutely the spiritual from the secular sphere is refuted at every turn by the logic of spiritual experience.

If we apply, then, this principle to the existing world around us, it is plain that, unless we assume the present social, political and international

order to be totally different in kind from that of every past epoch, it must contain much that is foreign to the true genius of Christianity, and that this alien element must be most hurtful to the victory of that spirit in the individual life.

The same is, of course, true of every past epoch, and therefore one of the cardinal problems of Christianity has always been, and still is, to know how, gradually and progressively, to reshape the existing political and social order in accordance with the spirit of its Founder. Hence it follows that the Church has always inevitably been concerned with a great variety of questions not explicitly dealt with by Jesus and His first disciples.

Never has that been so much the case as to-day, when the power to transform laws and institutions which once rested with a very limited class, on whom the whole responsibility therefore lay, has now been transferred to the great Democracies of modern times; a change which brings the problems which once lay on the Caesars and the Senates home to the moral life of our humblest Church members and citizens. The difficulty of the Christian is that he has no such clear guidance from his Master in these regions as he has in matters of individual duty, and his temptation, therefore, is to shrink from the burdens and cares inseparable from public interests, on the plea that they lie outside the sphere of the soul.

Once more, then, we ask the question with the deepest sense of its gravity, How are we to account for the silence of Jesus on matters of public spirit and patriotism?

The answer has three parts. (1) First, I shall seek to show that this whole range of duty and interest is implicitly provided for in the ground principles of Jesus, and more particularly in His teaching concerning the Kingdom of God; (2) next, I shall endeavour to explain the peculiar historical conditions which prevented Him from making that teaching explicit; and (3) finally, I shall argue that though there is a notable reticence in His teaching in these matters, yet His silence is not absolute, but that He expresses the reserved elements in His Mind in the language of poetry and symbol, the language of Apocalypse.

(1) First, then, the whole range of questions and interests of which Mill and Mazzini speak is included in the teaching of Jesus regarding the Kingdom of God. The goal of the entire life of the Christian is the realizing of the world-wide Kingdom, the supreme ethical category of the teaching of Jesus. In everything the disciple is to "seek first the Kingdom of God," to live for the realizing of a universal Society, united in the bonds of Love.

It is sometimes objected that this simple and grand conception is too wide and vague to be

our guide. Formally, it is sufficiently comprehensive, but it is lacking in definite material content. The answer to that is that the material content is derived from the Mind of Christ. But here again a preliminary question rises up in the way. How are we to determine the Mind of Christ? To answer that question in detail would carry us far beyond our immediate purpose, but our argument here starts from the conviction that the Evangelical account, to take a broad view of the case, is a substantially accurate one; that, however that account may have been put together, the net result of the process which gave us the four Gospels has been to yield the picture of a Personality, coherent in Himself, and adequate to account historically for the transformation of Judaism into Christianity.

Now, according to these Gospels, that Personality expresses Himself in teaching of a twofold type and in action. He is represented, firstly, as revealing the great foundation principles of religion and morality, which may be summed up as the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man; secondly, as teaching what may roughly be called the Messianic and Apocalyptic principles which demand faith in Himself, and which forecast His Second Advent and Judgment of the world; and, finally, as working

miracles of healing and of resurrection from the dead.

But the whole drift of modern Rationalistic criticism is to disparage the second and third of these as due either to error in the earliest historians or to survivals in the mind of Jesus Himself, and to lay all the emphasis on the first as the permanent element in the Christianity of Christ, and in further pursuance of this tendency to teach that the Sermon on the Mount gives us the real and complete idea of what the true Jesus aimed at. The rest, the Messianic and miraculous element, is, for the most part, *Aberglaube*, the clouds and darkness with which the mythopoetic imagination has enwrapped the true Jesus, or which, perchance, has even touched His own radiant soul.

Having therefore excised these adventitious elements, such critics examine the remainder, and test its validity by all the methods of comparative ethics. They find it beautiful, incomparable, well-nigh Divine; but, behold, it is incomplete. It needs supplementing from Pagan ethics, it does not teach "God as the Supreme Educator of Humanity," "progress the law of human life," "association" and so on. The inference of Mazzini naturally follows: the heart of Jesus is all right; it is His intellect that is lacking. "Jesus remains uncertain and

below the light of that idea, of which a glimpse has been revealed in our own day." His teaching, in short, is fragmentary and ethically incomplete.

Why, what did such critics expect? They excise two-thirds of the record. They leave us the remnant of a residuum, and then they find that fragment lacking in symmetry! Had it been anything else than incomplete under such treatment, the position would have been very much more serious for the Christian faith than it actually is.

In what follows a different method is observed. I shall ask the reader, for the sake of the argument, if meantime upon no other ground, to take the whole Evangelical record, not as verbally inspired, but as giving a broadly and substantially accurate view of the life-work and teaching of Jesus. In the light of the record thus accepted, we shall, I believe, reach a standpoint from which the difficulties alike of Weiss and of Wellhausen, of Mill and of Mazzini disappear.

Imagine a man, for instance, dwelling in communion with Jesus Christ, and through that communion imbued with His ideas of the Fatherhood of God, of the value of the human soul, of Love as the supreme virtue, and of the Kingdom of God as the chief good and the goal of human and Divine endeavour. When such a man

is set face to face with social or national emergencies his Christianity will appear as public spirit. The absence of explicit and detailed teachings of his Master on these matters will not disable him, for, in the absence of the "letter," the Spirit will be his sufficient guide. The same Spirit of Jesus which in the individual sphere prompted him to feed the hungry and clothe the naked will prompt him, also, to spend his time and energies, to sacrifice his ease and reputation in the endeavour to secure wise legislation, to reform cruel and unjust customs, and, in a word, to make his land, or state, or city, or village a prosperous province of the Kingdom of God. The mere conception of the Kingdom as his chief good will prevent him from being misled by the apparent silence of Jesus on those matters of which Mill and Mazzini speak, and about which they are so justly concerned. Life for the Kingdom of God as Jesus conceived it, that Jesus who by His miracles showed the value which He put on the physical as well as on the spiritual welfare of mankind, will commit him to all manner of devoted public spirit, and all the higher patriotism, and all the nobler and wiser philanthropy.

All that these Humanitarian teachers find lacking in the teaching of our Lord is really implicit in the idea of the Kingdom of God.

But why is it only implicit ? Why should Jesus not have been as explicit as His great forerunners, the Hebrew Prophets ? Here we return to the issue raised by Wellhausen and Weiss as to the true meaning of the Apocalyptic element in the teaching of Jesus, which was considered in the earlier part of this chapter.

(2) There is an explanation of the silence of Jesus on the civic and national virtues that seems to me entirely satisfactory. A teacher may be silent on account of his own lack of knowledge, but he may also be silent because of the immaturity of the pupil. He may have many things to say, but the pupil " may not yet be able to bear them," and so the teacher must wait, give him first principles, and tell him, by hint and dark saying and symbol, that there is more for him to learn. We shall now seek to prove that this was the method which Jesus followed.

A common answer is to say that Christ goes deeper and deals with matters more vital than civic and national duty. This is unquestionably true and important ; but, taken by itself, it is not, I think, sufficient, as on other matters Christ applies His deep and vital principles, and goes in some detail into their application to life. The full explanation is, I believe, to be found in the singular circumstances in which Jesus had to carry out His life-work.

It is clear from the Gospel narratives that in the time of His ministry volcanic fires were smouldering beneath the surface of Jewish society. The fierce and intractable character of the Jews was well-known to the Roman authorities, and the Roman legions were always in readiness in the castles of Caesarea and Antonia to repress the fanatical risings of the populace. Fear, and fear alone, held the Zealot element in check, and the Zealot was simply the spear-head of a much larger and therefore more formidable party. The Sadducee and Herodian parties, on the other hand, represented the worldly and politic interest, whose one desire was to stave off any collision between the people and the Roman power, at any sacrifice, as the event proved, of justice and truth. When we realize the true situation, and remember that it was historically and spiritually necessary that Christ should manifest Himself as Messiah, we can understand how precarious His position constantly was, and how incessant were the risks that He ran. For it was precisely the crude Messianic prejudices of the people that formed the terrible political danger, the shadow of which lay always on the shrewd practical mind of the Sadducee, and which, too, was ever present to the eyes of Christ—

Those eyes, elate and clear,
Which neither doubt nor fear,
Nor even love, nor glorious wrath could blind.

What His danger was we can easily see. It was the danger that at any moment the multitude who thronged, perplexed and yet fascinated, around Him should get out of hand, should insist upon taking Him by force and making Him a King, and so, in the eye of the Roman authorities, should cease to be deluded but harmless visionaries, whom they could regard with contemptuous tolerance, and should become seditious and dangerous fanatics, to be put down by the sword and the cross.

It is absolutely essential to the historical understanding of the life of Jesus that we should understand the central part which this Messianic element played in it. It was not the heavenly beauty of His moral and religious teachings alone that drew the multitudes round Him. It was to them a more dazzling thought; it was the hint, the surmise, the whisper that here, at last, was David's Son.

But it was not only the danger of confronting the embattled power of Rome that constantly hung over the head of Jesus, there was also the danger of prematurely alienating the people. He knew that while He was in truth the fulfilment of the deeper Messianic Hope of the Old

Covenant, none the less His conceptions of the Messianic Kingdom differed from those of His followers, even from those of the inner circle of His disciples. His task, then, was to retain these men, while by personal training and influence He gradually transmuted their gross expectations into a truer understanding of His aims and mission. It must be clear, however, that for such a task as this time was needed. The winning even of His disciples to thoughts so far beyond their age was no easy matter. How easily He might have failed we can see from the fact that one of those whom, after much deliberation and prayer, He had chosen betrayed Him, and from the fact that when at last the long-impending storm broke all the rest forsook Him and fled, and the most advanced in insight denied Him with curses. What He wanted was time, and the task took Him all His time.

The practical problem before Him, then, was first, to retain His immediate following; second, to prevent the insurgent Messianic enthusiasm awakened by His words and deeds from breaking forth into what the Romans might consider dangerous sedition; and finally to transmute and spiritualize the current Messianic Hope, and thereby to reveal to the people and to the twelve the true nature of the new spiritual commonwealth which was already in their midst.

Viewed by the light of these three principles, the whole spiritual strategy of Jesus becomes luminously clear. The Baptist announces that He is the Coming One ; the Temptation follows, the narrative of which tells in symbolic language how Jesus, alone in the wilderness, grappled, in clear foresight of what would follow, with the whole intricate moral problem that lay before Him. Returning victorious from the inward conflict, He arouses the already half-awakened Messianic consciousness of the people by proclaiming in Messianic language, " The Kingdom of God is at hand." Next, He forms, by gradual stages, which the Gospels indicate in detail, an inner circle of disciples to whom, when they are ready for it, the deeper teaching may be given. Next, in the Sermon on the Mount, He gives partial expression to the ethical ideals of the Kingdom, and shows their relationship and contrast with those of the Old Covenant, reserving, however, as I believe, something, and significantly abstaining from declaring Himself to be the Messiah, speaking, indeed, at this stage, rather of the Kingdom than of Himself and His place in it, and using, as time goes on and He must speak of Himself, the unfamiliar and, to those who first heard it, ambiguous term, " Son of Man." Works as well as words of wonder, nevertheless, rivet the perplexed multitude to Himself ;

they find in Him more than He admits, and it seems for a time as if He were about to carry the nation by storm. But, as time goes on, they cannot understand His reticence and His delay, they become impatient with this *fainéant* Messiah, who makes such exacting demands upon the conscience, and does so little in the way of exercising His miraculous powers in the liberation of His enslaved people ; and they begin to fall away. At last one striking miracle by the Galilean Lake awakens their enthusiasm anew, their long-repressed insurgent fanaticism breaks loose from His restraining grasp, and they "come and seek by force to make Him a king." Then Jesus, knowing all that, at this critical moment, His refusal means, puts them resolutely aside, and goes up into the mountain, amid the rising blast, to face the death that is now historically inevitable.

But while He has failed with the multitude, He has succeeded with the disciples. The old, crude prejudices, in their case, have been gradually melted away, and a true Messianic faith has taken deep root in their spirits. Having tested and made proof of this, and having, in the most emphatic and solemn way, confirmed it by asserting His Divine Nature and Commission, He makes ready for the close. He has used the brief time given Him to the utmost : the Kingdom,

weak and poor in outward appearance as yet, is already in the world, and the " gates of Hades " shall not prevail against it ; and so He now makes ready for that explicit public claim to be Messiah which is necessary and which has been so long withheld.

So He travels south on His last journey, and the multitude, thinking that after so long delay it is now going to have its will, follows Him once more, and then, by His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, in the most striking pictorial form, He makes His claim in a way that every one can understand. The claim comes upon the rulers like a thunderclap, following upon the lightning flash of the Resurrection of Lazarus. Terror drives Sadducees and Pharisees into coalition ; Caiaphas rises in the dismayed Sanhedrin and says : " The Romans will take away our place and power. . . . It is expedient that one man die for the people and that the whole people perish not." The elements of tragedy, that have been so long in solution, crystallize, and that follows which might, for a long while past, at any time have happened had Christ been less guarded in His methods : the Roman authority intervenes, Christ is accused of having sought to make Himself a King, and is crucified on Calvary.

The whole story unfolds itself like fate, and

who that follows it can fail to feel the justice and wisdom of Christ's reticence? The great and imminent danger all through has been the awakening of the crude and unreasoning Jewish patriotism, which at any moment might have precipitated the tragedy of the Cross, or have forced Christ into such an abuse of His miraculous power as would have stultified the decision which He had reached at the opening of His mission in the days of His Temptation in the wilderness.

In this, I believe, we have the true explanation of His silence as to the political, national and civic duties of men; in this, along with the fact that until the Jewish or some other nation had accepted the Kingdom of God, the true ethics of Christian patriotism could not be explicitly formulated. For, in the context of the national thought and feeling, Jesus could not deal with such matters without declaring Himself on the burning questions of the Messianic ideals in a way that would have been fatal to the accomplishment of His mission. Let any one ask himself how, given these circumstances, Christ could possibly have expressed His mind without wrecking His mission, and he will understand the true meaning of the gap in His explicit ethical teaching which has been mentioned.

But has He, therefore, simply ignored that

whole region? Are we left here wholly without guidance as Christian men, not only as to what we ought to do, but as to whether or no our Master makes any claim upon us, or wishes us to think of Him as deeply interested in such high and broad matters as the life and civilization of nations and of Humanity? Not so. If we take the great Principles of the Fatherhood of God, of the Mediation of Jesus and of the Kingdom of God; if we take along with these His explicit ethical teachings as we have them in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Gospels generally, and think out all that in the light of these principles the explicit precepts mean, we shall find implicitly contained in them all that is said to be lacking in the Christian morality.

(3) But that is not all. The element of thought and teaching which, owing to the peculiar circumstances which have been adduced as imposing reticence on Jesus, was necessarily held in reserve has found expression in another way. It is embodied in the most impressive pictorial form in the Apocalyptic teaching of Jesus. That teaching has caused great difficulty to all candid Christian interpreters. It seems to many that here Jesus has relapsed into Judaism, that the mind which rose sovereign over the barrenness of Jewish legalism has become befogged in the clouds of the Jewish Apocalyptic.

Far from this being the truth of the matter, this Second Advent teaching of Jesus forms the necessary supplement to His explicit moral and religious teaching.

When death drew near and the shadow of the Cross fell upon Him, conscious that as yet He had been unable to give the spiritual riches of the Kingdom of God full expression, and wishing to put His followers in the right attitude for the solution of the questions that must in time emerge, He flung the reserved elements of His teaching into symbolic form, and using the current and familiar imagery of Jewish Apocalypse, just as He had already used it in asserting His Messianic claim, He spoke the great Parousia Discourse.

Leaving on one side, for the present, all questions of detail, and looking simply to the broad meaning of that remarkable prophecy, the central idea is this: "Hitherto I have been among you in obscurity and weakness; I am now about to go away, but I am coming again in glory and in power to judge the world, and to bring in the Kingdom of God in its ideal perfection." The limits of space forbid any attempt to grapple here with the difficulties of the prophecy in matters of detail. These are neither few nor slight. They seem to me to be quite naturally and simply accounted for, however, when we remember the

highly figurative character of the language which Christ used, its inevitable obscurity, and the fact that these sayings have been preserved and recorded for us by men whose minds were saturated with the preconceptions of Jewish Apocalypse.

Take, first, the figurative character of the language of Jesus. The true way to the heart of the Apocalyptic teaching of Jesus is to take it as lofty spiritual poetry. It is a remarkable feature of His Individuality as it is presented to us in the Gospels, that when He is strongly moved He uses imagery of the boldest kind. His imagination seems to take fire and burn. Many instances of this might be given, but three will suffice for our immediate purpose. When His disciples return from a missionary journey with the news of great results He exclaims: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Prosaic interpreters, orthodox and rationalist, seize upon the words, and exploit them for their own purposes; but surely the meaning is plain. He is rapt into the Future, and in this first victory sees a sign of the coming downfall of evil, and casts the intuition into a vivid figure. More illuminating for our purpose is the discourse in the synagogue in Capernaum recorded in the sixth chapter of the Fourth Gospel, where He speaks of the need for His followers "eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood." He only uses language of this poignant

imaginative force when something has occurred which stirs His nature to the depths. The key to its use here lies in the occurrences of the preceding day. He knew that His action in finally refusing to be "made a King" meant the loss of the popular following which had hitherto stood between him and the hierarchy of Jerusalem. He knew, in a word, that death by violence was now imminent, and went up into the mountain above the Lake to face the Cross alone with God. The discourse in Capernaum expresses the substance of the inner conflict of that night on the mountain. At the Last Supper the same thought is resumed: "Take, eat, this is my Body broken for you." Again, we have His answer to Peter's Confession. We can see here, too, what it was that stirred Him so profoundly. His years had not been wasted, the transcendent mystery of His vocation had been grasped, the whole future history of the world turned upon that Confession, and out of the fulness of His heart he utters that profoundly spiritual and yet intensely imaginative saying, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my Church," out of which prosaic interpreters have created so extraordinary a perversion. Be it remembered that it is on these two latter instances that the dogmas of Transubstantiation and the supremacy of the Roman See have been founded, vast historic blunders turning appar-

ently at least on the prosaic interpretation of poetic figure, on the neglect of the Spirit and the worship of the Letter. When we realize the boldness of Christ's action in this matter, how freely He took the risks of being misunderstood, how natural it was to Him to use language of this vivid pictorial kind in moments of strong emotion, we can understand the symbolism of the Second Advent discourse.

Again, the instances just cited should teach us, how easily such language may have been misunderstood, even by those who first heard it. We know what labour and pain it cost Jesus Christ to transform the prejudices of His disciples regarding the First Coming of the Messiah. It surely need not surprise us if those who first recorded His sayings in the generation before our present Gospels were written should not at once have understood Him when He spoke in symbolic and mysterious language regarding his Second Coming ; and if it has taken the logic of experience to explain the full meaning of the Advent in glory and in power, as it took the logic of experience to explain the Advent in weakness.

But while all these considerations should teach us caution regarding a too literal interpretation of the details of the discourse, and also of the other passages in the Gospels relating to the Second Advent, they should not drive us to the impatient

and unscientific course of simply excising the whole Apocalyptic element as foreign to the real teaching of Jesus. As has already been said, the whole teaching of Jesus regarding His own Messiahship and regarding the Kingdom of God require it as the piers of an arch require the keystone.

(*a*) The Messianic claim; the whole method of Christ's dealing with His Apostles in making their new spiritual life centre in their personal relations with Him; the depth and passion of the worship and love and faith toward Him which their writings reveal; the whole evolution of early Christian thought during the centuries of conflict with Gnosticism and Arianism, an evolution the results of which were stratified in the three great creeds, refute Wellhausen's statement that "He did not consciously place His own Personality in the centre, He did not speak of the significance of His own Life and Suffering."

But having thus attached His followers to Himself, He was morally bound to promise them, as they stood by the abyss of His departure, that He would "come again." It is a symbolical way of saying that His physical departure from the world in no way implies His real departure, which would have reduced their new life to absolute chaos. Far from that, He is simply going to a new vantage ground, from which He will be enabled to exert a far more powerful influence upon them and upon

the world than when He was with them in the flesh. They will receive His Spirit, who will keep them in touch with His mind. But more than this, they will meet Him at every turn in the Providential progress of their fortunes and the fortunes of the Church. His departure, therefore, will not remit them to the spiritual position of devout Jews, who now understand God better because Jesus has taught them new truth about Him ; but the God with whom they have to do will still be *God in Christ*, God still manifesting Himself through Jesus, who will be His instrument in the great convulsions of Nature and History, through which mankind will be judged and the Kingdom will come, just as He had, under lowlier conditions, been the Father's instrument in succouring them in the storm on the lake, in feeding them with heavenly food, and in washing their travel-stained feet.

Had Christ not made these promises He would have stultified His earlier method and cut the nerve of Christian devotion, and His Figure would have slowly faded out of the high lights of faith and love into a dim and pathetic memory.

(*b*) His teaching concerning the Kingdom of God also demands as its completion the Parousia prophecy. That teaching invariably presupposes that the Kingdom, though weak and struggling now, will ultimately become universal and

supreme, and this victory, though men are commanded to labour and fight for it, is invariably regarded as the gift and act of God. It is of the very essence of the idea that the founding, the maintenance and the victory of the Kingdom are all of the Divine Grace. The Kingdom is not only an Ethical, it is an Evangelical Idea. Therefore, in the Kingdom's darkest hour, it was necessary that the Founder should renew in the most solemn way His assurance that the hour was advancing when the Kingdom should come in glory and in power, and manifest its true character in the great spheres of cosmical life, as it had already done under more straitened and lowly conditions.

These two principles, I believe, form the substance of the Parousia discourse. Whether the Second Coming implies a return of the Incarnate Jesus, a literal physical reappearance on the field of History, is a question altogether secondary. That the phrase, "Ye shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven," does not necessarily imply this is clear from His saying to the High Priest, "Henceforth (from this time onward) ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God and coming in the clouds of Heaven," where the language is obviously symbolical, and implies simply that He is God's Vicegerent, and ever and again "comes" in special manifestations of the Divine Power. But while

this is so, the whole drift of the Apocalyptic teaching of Jesus appears to me to imply further that this process reaches at last a culmination and term. The imagery seems to imply something more than an asymptotical progress of the Kingdom in the world, a pursuit of an ever receding goal, it indicates a final victory of the Kingdom and its King. The separate "Comings" of Christ in His providence are thus to be viewed as "moments" or "stadia" in the realization of a Divine purpose in which they all at last reach their consummation. This consummation is the true and perfect Coming of the Lord.

The whole Idea of the Second Coming has been much obscured by regarding it as primarily a coming to Judgment. The Judgment of Humanity ("all nations") by Christ is plainly an element in the Idea. But the primary Idea is the victory of the Kingdom of God, its Coming in glory and in power. In this victory Judgment is necessarily involved. The perfect victory of the Kingdom necessarily involves the ruin of those who are enemies of that Kingdom, and the salvation of those who have identified themselves with it. The whole passage relating to the last Judgment is Prophecy rather than Prediction. It deals with the Principles of the Divine Judgment rather than with the forecasting of the fate of particular individuals. It is concerned with types

of character, and it shows in vivid pictorial form what must befall such typical figures in view of the Victory of the Kingdom. But the climax is not that Judgment, but what lies beyond it. "Then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father." This is the climax of world-history, "the one, far-off Divine Event to which the whole Creation moves." The principle here asserted that the true meaning of the Parousia discourses is the symbolical and poetic presentation of the future victory of Christ in His Kingdom, that this is the primary truth and that the Idea of Judgment is the secondary and derivative truth, is of capital importance for the understanding of the Teaching of Jesus. This whole view of the future necessarily carries the disciple beyond religious Individualism. It is a practical assertion that the entire domain of human life belongs to Christ, not only that inner world in which each disciple walks alone with his God, but also the great outward world of human society in all its varied forms. The man who is in earnest with the idea of the Coming of Christ to claim His own in glory and in power, who believes therefore in the Victory of the Kingdom of God as the goal of history, must necessarily have his whole outlook upon human life conditioned thereby. He will have his thoughts directed not merely to his own spiritual state, his personal

shortcomings, attainments and hopes, but to a great objective end, the winning of the world for his Lord. He will plan his life with the view of doing his utmost to serve that end, and he will take the troubles that come to him as part of the schooling that he needs in view of that vocation. If he is in earnest with that Idea of the Victory of the Divine Kingdom, he will find the criticisms of Mill and Mazzini strangely beside the mark. For one thing he will be compelled to think out some view of the meaning of History in the light of this great climax, and so will at once find himself moving within the sphere of Ideas of which Mazzini speaks. He will, moreover, have to consider how that Kingdom can best be served in the present world around him, and he will find the Spirit of Jesus impelling him towards an ideal of action very different from that which Mill takes to be peculiarly "Christian"[1] And in both cases he will be perfectly certain that he is not grafting upon Christianity anything that is not there, he will be quite clear that he is simply carrying out in the present world the mind of the Jesus of History.

The real meaning of the Second Advent Teaching of Jesus is the claim to be the rightful Lord of the entire world of Human Society, and the assertion that one day the Kingdom will come in glory and in power, and that all men will inevit-

[1] See p. 175.

ably be judged as an incident of that victory by their relation to it. Such a claim of right on the part of the Master obviously carries with it a duty on the part of the disciple.

Thus the Parousia discourse is the logical consequence of what the Gospels elsewhere tell us of Christ, and the logical presupposition of what we find in the Epistles. It is part of the organic unity of the New Testament system of life and thought, and is approved by its necessary place in that system.

That these predictions exerted a powerful influence upon the development of the consciousness and thought of the Apostles is plain. This may be best brought out by examining the development in the Pauline Epistles and in the Book of Revelation.

In the former we have ample opportunity of studying the way in which the Christian Revelation presented itself to one of the greatest minds and largest hearts that history has ever seen, and the spectacle is one of singular interest. It is a remarkable fact that the term, "the Kingdom of God," which Christ used far more frequently than He used any other to describe His own conception of the Christian salvation, is so rarely used by the Apostle Paul. Various explanations have been given of this. It has been argued that Christ's use of the term was mainly an accom-

modation to Jewish ideas, and that Paul's spiritualizing genius enabled him to penetrate to the Master's real idea, so that, stripping away the Jewish husk, he is able to give us the kernel in his teaching concerning the Church. Others reverse the estimate, and depreciate Paul's insight on the ground that the Church is a narrower and less spiritual conception than the Kingdom.

Both views rest on the altogether mistaken assumption of the identity of the Church and the Kingdom. This is true neither of the Gospels[1] nor of the Epistles. In the former the Kingdom has been long in the world before the Church gets under weigh or we hear its name. Moreover, Christ Himself uses both terms ; they are distinct, and it requires some ingenuity to identify two ideas which demand such different forms of expression.

[1] "Since Augustine's time the Kingdom of Heaven or Kingdom of God, of which we read so often in the Gospels, has been simply identified with the Christian Ecclesia. This is a not unnatural deduction from some of our Lord's sayings on this subject taken by themselves ; but it cannot, I think, hold its ground when the whole range of His teaching about it is comprehensively examined. We may speak of the Ecclesia as the visible representative of the Kingdom of God, or as the primary instrument of its sway, or under other analogous forms of language. But we are not justified in identifying the one with the other, so as to be able to apply directly to the Ecclesia whatever is said in the Gospels about the Kingdom of God."—Hort's *The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 19.

Doubtless the two categories are to a considerable extent coincident, the circles are concentric and have a wide common area, but I believe that they are distinct, and that the Kingdom is much the wider of the two. The Church is the visible community of professing Christians founded by our Lord for the propaganda of the Kingdom, and by virtue of its visibility it is subject to limitations from which the Kingdom is free. As a visible organization it has its Sacraments and its Polity, and must take the risks of history in order that it may accomplish its work in the world of space and time. It is the League of the Kingdom of God, and, like the Family and the State, the two other great forms of historical association, rests upon and exists for that supreme end.

In the Pauline Epistles the primordial conception of the Kingdom parts into two, the Church and the Parousia, and it is not difficult to conceive how this happened.

Let us seek to put ourselves in the Apostle's position. Let us imagine him in the years of waiting in Arabia and Tarsus surveying the spacious world-field and revolving the great campaign. Abiding in Christ as he does, it is clear that nothing can content him save the conquest of the whole world for the Lord, and that that conquest must be not only extensive but intensive, implying not only the conversion of all men,

but the reconstitution of the whole world of individual and social life according to the mind of Christ. Imagine this, for argument's sake at least, and imagine the Apostle started on his memorable career. But as he goes forward, seeking to subdue the whole world for Christ, he becomes aware that, while to a certain extent the world is impressible by the Gospel, there is a whole social order of entrenched wrongs and cruelties that he cannot touch, evils that are wholly against the mind of Christ, but that he can no more alter than he can alter the climate of the Taurus uplands or still the tempests of Adria. Hoary institutions like Slavery, State Paganism with its blasphemy of Apotheosis, the murderous Gladiatorial games—although we hear comparatively little of these things in the Epistles, we cannot doubt that they filled the soul of the great Idealist with anger and grief and shame. What could he do to destroy them? To denounce them would accomplish nothing but the premature shortening of his own ministry. One thing he could do. He could set himself to win converts out of the dying heathen world, he could organize them into Churches, he could devote his life by precept and example to making these Churches strong, and as for these unattainable matters could leave them to the Lord to set right at the Parousia. Christ was returning soon. Once He had come in

weakness : soon He was coming in glory and in power. Emperor and Praetor and Sanhedrin should own Him then. " Then cometh the end, when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and all power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet."

It is from this point of view, I believe, that we must interpret Paul's teaching regarding the Kingdom, the Church and the Parousia. The social side of Christianity is, as it were, masked under the idea of the Parousia, just as I have endeavoured to show that Christ meant it to be. It is masked, but it is also conserved ; for so long as the idea of the Parousia remained, there was no fear that acquiescence in the present evil order would react hurtfully upon Christian faith and morality. Had it not been for the Parousia hope, the early Church might have been prematurely hurled against the Empire as a Revolutionary force, or through enforced acquiescence in its evils have become a merely pietistic association, a new Essenism on a larger scale.

It does not, of course, follow from the above that this analysis of the idea of the Kingdom into Church and Parousia was necessarily a conscious analysis on the part either of Paul or of the early Christians. Most probably it was not. The whole process was largely instinctive and unconscious. The religious and moral intuitions

go "sounding on their dim and perilous way," guided by a Spirit within and a Providence without the soul, to ends, which, at the time, they do not fully recognize, though they become plain enough afterwards, and so it probably was in this case. But, whether it be so or not, the fact remains that the full glory of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God was not able adequately to manifest itself within the Empire of the first centuries, and so it found utterance partly in the life of the Churches and partly in the poetry and symbol of Apocalypse.

But while this outlook upon the Parousia lightened the burden under which the Christian consciousness groaned, it could not wholly remove the difficulties which the pressure of a heathen environment created for the early believers, and so we find a considerable part of the Pauline Epistles devoted to such problems and the Christian way of solving them. Such are the counsels as to how Christians should act with reference to slavery, to marriage under heathen conditions, to the use of meats offered in heathen sacrifices and so on. They are, one and all, temporary solutions of problems of casuistry. They show us Paul making the best of the inevitable circumstances, but as constantly anticipating the time when the whole evil environment will be swept away. Thus every reference to the Lord's Second Coming is a witness

to incompleteness, and veils an aspiration after a nobler world than this system of "blood and iron," of pride and lust and luxury, which is known to the Apostolic writers as "the world," and to us as that complex whole made up of many Pagan civilizations, Hellenic culture and the Roman Empire. No doubt, as Professor Ramsay has shown, Paul was not blind to the nobler side of the Empire. His mind was too large and just to be blind to the complexity of its problems and the majesty of its achievement. But he accepted it simply until "the Lord" should "come" and should "put down all rule and all authority and all power." Meantime, there was the Church to extend and strengthen while the advent lingered.

In what has already been said, we have, I believe, the key to the Apocalyptic passages in all the Epistles; but we may pass now from these Epistles to the consideration of that book in which the stream of Apocalyptic widens into a sea, and which is known by pre-eminence as "The Apocalypse." Here, if anywhere, shall we find the true genius of the Apocalyptic idea disclosing itself, for here alone in the New Testament has it space and opportunity to reveal its inner spirit. How are we to view this extraordinary book, which has been and is the despair of so many interpreters? To most people its bizarre

imagery, its complicated structure, its general unintelligibility make it a gigantic riddle. It seems to them, perhaps, to form a strange anti-climax to that splendid literature of the soul which preceded it. They are at home in the "Gospels" and in the "Acts," the "Epistles" are to them no jungle of Jewish overgrowth, but "a garden full of fountains"; but in this strange world of earthquake and eclipse, of fury and agony, of trampling armies and thundering angel music, they are perplexed and repelled. The whole Apocalyptic problem here reaches its climax. Why is it in the New Testament at all? What is the meaning of this huge erratic boulder lying in the great and fertile plain of meadow and harvest, and populous city, and flowing stream and spacious haven?

No attempt can be made here to unravel the tangled skein of the imagery, to explain the "Vials" and the "Trumpets" and the "Living Creatures" and the weird "Riders," or to enter into the more recent critical analyses of the composite structure of the Apocalypse, but the broad general meaning of the book seems to me perfectly clear. It is, in the main, the cry of the Christian heart, harassed and burdened and tortured by the pressure of the Pagan Empire, for a Christian environment. The days of tolerance and impartiality of the Pauline Epistles are

past, the " Beast " sits upon the throne, demoniac cruelty and violence govern the world, the Church struggles for life. Never has there been so sharp an antithesis between the right that is weak and the wrong that is all-powerful. Hence, out of the very agony of the moment, rises this protest and appeal to the Ancient of Days. Like the Epistles, the Book of Revelation consists in part of practical counsels to the Churches and in part of Apocalyptic previsions; but, whereas in the Epistles the practical part greatly exceeds the predictive, here the proportions are reversed. The Apocalypse opens with the message to the Seven Churches of Asia, the burden of which is similar to that of the Epistles. " I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown." Then follows scene after scene of the vast panorama, in which we see judgment wrought upon the great world and the wreck of Rome, the Harlot, the Mother of Abominations, who is drunk with the blood of the saints. The interests of the Apocalypse are all on the grandest scale; the movement of nations is in it and the thunder of armies, and the culmination of the whole is found at last in the coming of the perfect society. Babylon is fallen, and the Holy City appears in its stead.

" And I, John, saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven,

prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.' And He that sat upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new!'" Immediately afterwards the vision is repeated and expanded. Again, from a great mountain the seer beholds the coming of the Holy City. "And he carried me away in the Spirit into a great and high mountain, and showed me that great City, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God. . . . And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof. And the City had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof. And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of Life."

This is the true climax of the Bible, the closing verses of the Apocalypse being, for the most part, a practical epilogue, and it is in these words also that the true genius of the Apocalyptic element in the New Testament most clearly discloses itself, and that we can see it to be in essence an aspiration after, and faith in, the final coming of a perfected Society which is symbolized as the New Jerusalem, just as the old heathen civilization is symbolized by the City of the Seven Hills, the Harlot arrayed in scarlet robes, the Babylon of the New Testament. We are shown judgment falling upon Rome, and then we see, as the last result of time, the New Jerusalem descending out of Heaven from God. The conflict between the heathen and the nascent Christian civilization is thus the theme of the Apocalypse, and a grander could hardly be imagined. When the aim is rightly grasped, when we penetrate beneath the time forms of thought and language borrowed from Jewish Apocalyptic, when we refuse to entangle ourselves prematurely in details, and view the movement as a whole, the magnificence of the book comes home to us. It is the *Divina Commedia* of Scripture, alive with moral passion, alight with noble imagination, a fitting climax to the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles, and doubly interesting to our own time from the fact that it is the expression of a revolt against a worn-

out world-order, a civilization of custom, armament and law alien to the genius of the new Faith, and of aspiration after a Divine Environment, which shall be great enough to contain the "nations of them that are saved," and noble enough to be in harmony with "the life hid with Christ in God."

Just as the Epistle to the Hebrews looks back through the long vistas of the past of the Chosen People, so the Apocalypse gazes away down the dim paths of the future, and the aim of both books is the same, to find "the Lord" therein. No book is so resonant with the great voices of history as the Apocalypse. If one may yield for the moment to the fancy that there are certain scenes fitted to the genius of certain different parts of the Sacred Writings, so that one might choose to read the Psalter among the "sanctuaries of the Alps," or the Epistles in some populous city humming with life and movement, then the Apocalypse might well be studied in some world-famous scene, where nations met together in conflict and civilizations arose to greatness or received their death-blow in the ravine of Gravelotte, or on the rolling plains of Moukden.

There is one aspect of the whole problem of the meaning of the Apocalyptic element in the New Testament of capital importance, of which it may appear that the argument of these pages

has taken no account. Is it not the case that the New Testament represents the consummation of the Kingdom of God as something of which the scene is Eternity rather than Time. Does it not picture the Parousia as the initiation of the heavenly Kingdom, rather than as the consummation of that Kingdom upon earth? The answer to that question has already been presupposed in what has been said. The picture which we have of the Parousia seems sometimes to waver between heaven and earth. On the one hand, Jesus "comes" to the earth. That is a word that could not possibly have been used by Him unless He had thought of the victory of His Kingdom in Time. On the other hand, He speaks of the "Children of the Resurrection" as being loosed from the physical conditions of this life in terms which show that the resurrection life of His followers must be very different from the life of Time even at its best. So in the Epistles and Apocalypse we find a constant yearning and hope for a Kingdom better than anything that is possible within the world of Nature and of Time, a life delivered not only from sin, but from pain, decay and death.

The hope of the prophets is no longer sufficient for the Apostles, and behind the splendid foreground of the prophetic ideal there now arises a vision of the vaster arena of Eternity. It is

impossible to maintain that that yearning is unjustified, for to do so would be to deny the whole spirit of Christianity.

> The Life that knows no ending, the tearless Life is *there*.

But must we therefore relegate the triumph of the Kingdom wholly to Eternity? Must we think of the Parousia as simply an in-breaking of God to destroy the forces that have won the battle of Iniquity in Time, and carry off the faithful but defeated remnant to a land of fadeless bliss? If the view which I have defended is sound, the message of the New Testament is quite different. On that view the Parousia is at once the Process of the Victory of the Kingdom and its Climax. Viewed as Climax, it is at once the perfection of the earthly form of the Kingdom, and, by that very fact, the point of transition to the new and heavenly realm. Humanity in the earthly victory of the Kingdom will have reached all that was possible under the conditions of space and of time, and then will be led into the grander sphere of the heavenly world. What that greater life of the Kingdom will be like we cannot fully tell. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him." But it is none the less true that "God hath re-

vealed them unto us by His Spirit." That is in effect to say, that we can be sure of this at least, that there will be spiritual continuity between the earthly life of the Kingdom and the heavenly; that the Kingdom on this side the bourne and the Kingdom on that are in principle the same Kingdom, and that the best way to serve the further vaster Order is to labour for the full realization of the City of God on earth. As in ancient history the men who best served the City of the Violet Crown and the City of the Seven Hills were serving also, though they knew it not, the great World Commonwealth of our own day, so those who labour for the perfect human society will find their service of Christ therein taken up into the vast movement of the Purpose of God and realized in the Eternal City.

Such, I believe, is the order of aspirations that is adumbrated in the Apocalyptic teaching of the New Testament, a teaching veiled in the language of poetry and symbol, and yet a teaching that has its roots deep in the consciousness of Christ and in the nature of the Christian life. It is the utterance of the need for a nobler environment for that life than the existing world can give, and of the faith that God in Christ will bring this new environment into being.

In our own day, in a world which, with all its

defects and crimes, is so much nearer this consummation, we feel the same need with ever-increasing force, and in various forms the Christian Church is expressing its sense of that need, and awakening to its duty. If any age should be able to understand that Apocalyptic element it is our own, an age which aspires after a humaner social order and a universal peace. How is it, then, that in our day the Apocalyptic element in the New Testament is so little understood, that those who are most interested in the Second Advent often seem to care so little for social progress and are ranked among the pietists and quietists of the Church, while those who are most deeply interested in these wider problems find little to attract them in this side of Christian thought? The answer is, I believe, to be found in two things: first, in the literalism which takes the Apocalyptic element in its accidents and ignores its essence; and, second, in that one-sidedness of modern thought, which has for the time almost lost hold of the truth of the Divine Transcendence and Providence in the government of the world.

Those who insist that the Apocalyptic passages in the New Testament must be fulfilled to the letter forget to give due importance to the consideration that there is a symbolic element in all prophecy, just as there is in all poetry, and indeed in all forms of thought in which the imaginations

and the emotions are deeply stirred. But, in the very nature of the case, these symbols must be taken from imagery familiar to the prophet and his audience. The unknown future must be depicted in colours borrowed from the present and the past. Moreover, just as the artist seizes on certain aspects of a scene, emphasizes them, and suffuses the whole picture with the idea which he must express, so does the prophet deal with his picture of the future; and just as it would be, in general, absurd to expect photographic accuracy from the artist, so it is absurd to take the prophetic vision as giving a photographic view of the future course of events. On the other hand, even as the artist's justification is that he takes us further into the spirit of Nature by his method than the photographer could do, so the prophet gives us a far deeper insight into the springs and course and issue of history than could the most accurate predictive annalist. It is his Idea that we must try to grasp, rather than the details of the imagery in which he seeks to embody it. We lose that Idea when, with the Rationalist, we dissolve the reign of Christ in the victorious Kingdom into a mere triumph of Christian ideas; or when, with the Literalist, we dwell on the details of the symbolism: we retain it when we realize that the Personal Christ is actually to-day the judging and ruling power in history, and that

all His Providence converges on the triumph of the Kingdom of God.

It is this unnecessary insistence on symbol and detail which has largely made the Apocalyptic teaching of the New Testament an element of Christian thought foreign to the serious culture of our time, and relegated the hope of the Second Advent to certain narrow circles, or to teachers, who, whatever high personal respect we may have for them, are not in touch with the more vigorous mental life of our time, or in full sympathy with those aspirations after a nobler social and industrial order which are the modern analogue, in part at least, of the aspirations of Christian Apocalypse.

On the other hand, modern social reformers are largely under the influence of a Time Spirit, which leads them to look upon their problems rather from the ethical than from the religious standpoint. Human, rather than Divine agency, they believe, must build the City of God. It is to arise out of the ruins of Babylon, not to descend out of Heaven from God. But, although this tendency of thought may be powerful at the moment, though in their revolutionary fervour, or under the spell of the ideas of Evolution and Law, many in our day have flung aside the belief in the Divine Government and Judgment of the world, that mood cannot endure. The stars in

their courses fight against it; the deeper and more persistent currents of history sweep in another direction. Humanitarian enthusiasm alone can never solve the social problem. Only One Power has might and steadfastness and authority enough to carry mankind through the vast and stormy sea of change that lies between it and its ideal consummation, and that Power is the Power of God.

There is no real contradiction between the most strenuous insistence on the duty of men to labour unremittingly for human progress, and that profound religious conviction which recognizes with gratitude and awe that man need not carry the burden of the future, because it is borne by Him who alone has strength to bear it; and which sees, therefore, that the true destiny of man is reached only when he falls in with, and dedicates himself to, that Eternal Purpose, which manifests itself with increasing plainness in Nature, Providence and Grace, but which can only fully be known when "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND SCIENCE

Chapter V

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND SCIENCE

THE position in which Christian thought finds itself at the present time is in some respects analogous to that in which it found itself in the first centuries of Christian antiquity. When the new faith first emerged from the Jewish home in which it was born and came out upon the great field of the Pagan world, it found not only certain Schools of Philosophy, but what is wider and vaguer than any philosophy, what is partly its cause and partly its effect, a certain popular way of looking at things, a common order of thought, already in possession. The Gospel in itself was a simple enough matter. The heart and drift of it were simply that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself"; but around this central message there shone more dimly a halo of other truths, of principles relating to the Divine Nature and Government, to Sin, and Redemption, and Judgment,

—a Christian view of God and the World and the Soul,—which were all implied in that central message, and which in many respects were in collision with that common element in ancient thought of which we have spoken.

Hence, as soon as the Gospel came out into the open there arose that vast and obscure turmoil of thought which we find in the Gnostic controversies of the first centuries. Gnosticism, to use Harnack's phrase, was "an acute secularizing of Christianity"; that is to say, it was a thoroughgoing attempt on the part of those early thinkers to graft the faith in Christ which they possessed upon a Pagan stem, to equate the Gospel with *Weltanschauungen* largely alien to it. Hence arose those bizarre and fantastic cosmologies with which the student of early Church History is familiar, and which it seems so incredible that any reasonable being could have believed as a rational explanation of the great and awful problems of human life and destiny.

Nothing, however, can be clearer than the fact that, in these obscure and grotesque controversies, a life and death battle for the Christian faith was being stubbornly fought out, and that this battle had to be fought through before that faith could win its way to world-wide dominion. The conflict was inevitable and irrepressible. Christianity, alike in its Central Gospel, and in its

World-view, must come to terms with Hellenism, must do it justice where it was true, and deny and supplant and destroy it where it was false; and, pending that settlement, it must find itself hampered and arrested at every turn, chilled in its missonary zeal, crippled in its ecclesiastical organization, and thwarted in its endeavour to moralize the civilization around it according to the mind of its Founder.

So, in our day, Christianity has found itself face to face with a new order of thought with which it must in some fashion or other come to terms if its aim of world-conquest is to be realized. For Hellenism we must read Natural Science, and the great halo of quasi-scientific and mixed popular ideas that she brings in her train.

The position of Science is incomparably stronger than that of the medley of philosophies and beliefs that early Christianity had to encounter. No educated man doubts the solidity and permanence of her contribution to human thought. But Science, too, like the ancient philosophy, brings with all her light a halo of mixed conceptions, which at first sight seem wholly alien to the Christian Idea. In the "psychological climate" of this quasi-science Christianity seems an exotic. Until this period shall have been closed, and this difference transcended, the aggressive force of Christianity, as in

the first centuries, will be crippled and hampered at every turn. It is this sense of strain, of division between the mind and heart, that lies behind the steady flow of polemical and eirenical works from either side, and it lies also behind many an individual and social problem that seems remote enough from the dim fields of speculation.

This chapter is an endeavour to contribute certain suggestions towards a solution of one of the central problems, the reconciliation of the scientific conception of the world as a Reign of Law and the Christian conception of it as a realm of Divine Providence. The man who is brought up in the scientific view of the world finds in it a vast system of phenomena which recur or vary according to uniform law. Step by step Science has pushed her vedettes from one sphere of phenomena to another, from the Inorganic to the Organic, from the Organic to the Sociological, until now she claims to have demonstrated the existence of this uniform Reign of Law within all the lower range of natural phenomena, and to have established a presumption, amounting well-nigh to a certainty, of its reign also within the higher spheres of society and history.

Waiving altogether, as we may well do in the meantime, the question of her success in this latter endeavour, we must recognize that at first sight the demonstration of the Reign of Law in

Nature seems to conflict with that view of the world which we derive from the revelation which culminates in Christ. If we take a man who has been living purely in the world of scientific ideas and transport him into the world of thought associated with revealed religion, we cannot wonder if he shows signs of surprise and revolt. He has changed his "psychological climate." He has been living in a world of uniformities, of measured spaces and forces and times, a world of which the central principle seemed to be its own consistent action; and the world into which Revelation would bring him seems to be ruled by radically different principles. For, from start to finish, there can really be no doubt as to the teaching of Revelation. In the clearest and most memorable fashion it proclaims that God's Providence controls in their own interest whatsoever happens to His children.

If you try to take this faith out of the Old Testament, Hebrew religion becomes a mere ruin. Take the Psalmists: what can shake their conviction that the whole power of God is at the disposal of the solitary faithful spirit, for protection, discipline and salvation; what can match their magnificent confidence in God as the Shepherd, the Fortress, and the Refuge of the soul? All the histories in like manner are based on this theory of human life, and the gigantic

spiritual achievement of Prophecy is undertaken and carried through in the strength of this faith. And when we come to the climax of Revelation we find this principle expressed with a clearness which cannot be increased. "Be not anxious for the morrow," said Jesus, "for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." Nor does any one of the Apostles ever dream of moving from this ancient standpoint. Further, this faith in the detailed care of a Heavenly Father, who adjusts the fortunes of His children to their true needs, is not expressed simply in isolated passages, which can be questioned as conceivably spurious, or, if accepted, can be dissolved away into poetic metaphors. The whole conception of the Christian character is based upon faith in this principle—its courage, self-devotion, confidence and calm. If the Heavenly Father in truth cares for His children, these virtues are rational; but if this be a dream, then these virtues, losing their rational root, become mere fading flowers in a chill and sterile world. The house of glass is broken, and the fading of the lovely hues and graceful forms of the tropical exotics is only a question of time. "Be not anxious for the morrow," said Jesus, "for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." That is a view that hangs together well. But if it reads, "Be not anxious for the morrow, for

natural law will maintain its unvarying course," that is another matter. If my fortunes are to be determined simply by the laws of the Struggle for Existence, Natural Selection, and the Survival of the Fittest, why should I not be anxious? The more anxious I am, the better. The difficulty certainly seems a serious one, and so long as we stand by the barely Positivist view of Science and the barely Individualist view of religion, it would seem to be insoluble so far as the intellect is concerned.

But in stating these limitations we have already indicated the lines of a solution. Whenever the human mind endeavours to frame a world-view it is compelled to pass beyond the Positive standpoint; and Evangelical religion has in like manner outgrown the excessive Individualism which for a time characterized it.

Take, first, the drift on the scientific side. The whole conception of Evolution is teleological. There is an interesting passage in Mr. Darwin's *Life* in which this point is very clearly brought out by him in a letter to Professor Asa Gray, thanking him for an article written in *Nature*, June 4, 1874. "What you say about Teleology," he writes, "pleases me especially, and I do not think any one else has ever noticed the point. I have always said you were the man to hit the nail on the head." The passage referred to in

Professor Gray's paper is thus given: "Let us recognize Darwin's great service to Natural Science in bringing back to it Teleology, so that, instead of Morphology *versus* Teleology, we shall have Morphology wedded to Teleology." In the same strain Professor Huxley wrote: "Perhaps the most remarkable service which Mr. Darwin has rendered to the Philosophy of Biology is the reconciliation of Morphology and Teleology, and the explanation of the facts of both which his views offer. The teleology which supposes that the eye, such as we see it in man or in one of the higher vertebrata, was made in the precise structure that it exhibits, for the purpose of enabling the animal which possesses it to see, has undoubtedly received its death-blow. Nevertheless, it is necessary to remember that there is a wider teleology, which is not touched by the doctrine of Evolution, but is actually based upon the fundamental proposition of Evolution" (*Darwiniana*, p. 110).

Waiving, as outside our immediate purpose, the question as to whether the concession as to the wider Teleology does not involve the narrower Teleology, and the further and more difficult question as to whether there is not a metaphysical element in all Teleological judgments, and noting also that Professor Huxley declares himself unable to say what the *Telos* is, the Supreme End on which

the Hidden Purpose is moving along all the myriad lines of natural process, we must emphasize the vital fact, which is, that here the transition is made from the Positive to the Teleological standpoint, from one world-view to another.

The further transitions from Supreme End to Purpose, and from Purpose to Mind, and from Mind to Personality, as the ground of Nature, are not, I think, by any means so serious as the step already taken. But having thus granted that all evolutionary process converges upon some Supreme End, we cannot arbitrarily arrest the further inquiry as to the nature of this End. It is clear that by thus granting that Evolution has a Supreme End, we are committed to the further position that this End, in its perfection, cannot lie in the earlier but in the later stages of that Evolution. If we make a series of cross-sections through the history of Nature and Human Life, we find, first, a time when there was nothing but the Inorganic, and then we find, later, the Organic world arising within the Inorganic. Using the Supreme End as our criterion we say that, relatively to it, the Organic is higher than the Inorganic realm. Later, we make another cross-section, and we find that within the Organic there has appeared the Conscious, and, later still, the Human. Henceforward we find the central interest of the story turning

on the fortunes of Human Society, the evolution of the Social Organism, the last and highest result of Time.

From the standpoint of Evolution this associated Human Life is higher than the Astronomical forces which regulated the cohering of the fire mist; higher than the Physical and Chemical forces which regulated the shaping of our planet, higher than the forces which impelled the sentient but irrational world along its astonishing course of development until man appeared in the arena. The family, the tribe, the nation, mark ascending grades of the same immense process, and already the signs of a new and wider organization of human society can be discerned by the thoroughgoing evolutionist. It is, of course, a conceivable hypothesis that all this vast process of Evolution is a mere bye-product of the play of the inorganic forces, and therefore that the last and highest result of time will be annihilated by some cosmic catastrophe, or will gradually wither away and die beneath the steady pressure of an alien environment, and the universe return once more to the point from which it began; but in so far as we accept such conclusions we cease to be Evolutionists and practically forsake the standpoint of Teleology.

Rejecting such an anti-climax, we are left with some form of human society as the goal of Evolution. If it be objected that this conclusion

is wider than the facts and the method warrant us in assuming, that there may be something higher than any form of human society which we can picture, we can at least say this, that such a conception is the very highest that from the human standpoint we can frame, and that, whatever may be the ideal Supreme End, it must include and conserve all that is highest in human society, as every existing human society includes and conserves the subordinate realms of the inorganic, organic and conscious worlds out of which it came. We must think of the goal of Evolution, if we think of it at all, in such terms, for they are nearer the truth than any others that we can choose. We can further say that they are nearer the truth and will lead us less astray than would silence and the arrest of thought.

But if this be so, if there be a real climax to the long history of nature, then it surely must needs be that no part of the long chain of process that leads to this consummation can be without meaning. Logical coherence compels us to suppose that the whole natural order is an immense system of final causes converging at last upon one Supreme End, the "one far-off Divine event, to which the whole Creation moves." It is towards this end that law must be working, the ocean currents flowing, the mists rising and falling, the strata being piled mountains high, and human life being

lavished by land and sea. All roads of Nature at last converge upon some Mother City of Man.

But is this version of the scientific conception of the Reign of Law in radical antagonism with the Christian view of the world? If the argument has hitherto been sound, it is, on the contrary, in profound harmony with it. If it is true that Thought must advance from the Positive to the Teleological standpoint, it is true also that the advance of Biblical Theology has carried religious thought beyond the narrower Individualism in which it was bound, and has given it a vaster horizon and a larger hope. The Gospels also teach us that all God's Providences converge upon a universal end, which is nothing else than the most perfect form of Society, a union of God and Humanity in the "Kingdom of God."

It is true that the goal of the world-process which Science dimly forecasts is a narrower synthesis than the great synthesis of God and Humanity of the Christian faith; but, as we have seen, this is only what we might have expected; there is no real contradiction; the less runs out into the greater, the greater includes the less. Moreover, just as the Supreme End of Science will cast light on all the steps whereby it has been attained, just as the "wider" will include and explain the "narrower Teleology," so in Revealed Religion the "one far-off Divine Event" casts light on all the ways of

God's Providence with individual men. Scripture, with all its daring claim that the world is made for the believing soul, never suffers us for long to forget that the soul is made to find its true life only in something greater than itself. Throughout all its course we "hear the mighty waters rolling evermore." We see behind Patriarch and Psalmist and Prophet the History of Redemption sweeping onwards to its hidden goal. Then comes the time when the Supreme End of all God's individual Providences is made clear in Jesus Christ. "Now, after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe in the Gospel.'" From that day, as before it, the *rationale* of all God's ways with men is the Kingdom of God. All privileges are given with a view to service. Daily bread is given that the Kingdom may come. The narrower runs out into the wider Teleology.

It may be objected by some, from the religious side, that to bring in this ulterior aim is to mar the relation between the soul and God. If the Father, it may be said, love not the child for his own sake, how can He expect the child to love Him for His? If God in all His dealings with me is thinking of some service which He wishes to get out of me for Humanity, does not this spoil the

whole filial relation? Such an objection can have force only for one who does not adequately realize the solidarity of the Kingdom of God. As if I could have any true good apart from the Kingdom of God! As if anything that injured its true interests did not injure mine! As if anything that aided it did not in the long run minister to my highest good! Whatever touches that City touches the Christian man, for he shall live in it, he shall walk its streets. Even now he inhabits it and shares its fortunes militant as he shall share them at the last triumphant. The converse is equally true and is hardly less important. In caring for me, God is caring for His Kingdom. Cheapen the individual soul, make light of its wants, its value, its possibilities, and you cheapen the Kingdom of God. An aggregate of ciphers, no matter how huge, will never amount to more than zero. The aggregate varies with the value of the units.

Returning then to the apparent antithesis between the religious and the scientific views of the world with which we began, we find that both, when rightly regarded, converge upon a great world-end of a social order. If the ends, then, of the two *Weltanschauungen* tend to identity, can there be any real contradiction between the means? Is it not more probable that the apparent contradictions between the scientific and reli-

gious explanations of any given fact arise from the very different point of view from which the fact is regarded, rather than from any vital opposition of principle? It is not contended that the solution suggested here does not stand in need of supplement from other ways of dealing with the question, nor even that with these aids all difficulties are finally removed. But it is maintained that the introduction into the field of thought of the principle of the Kingdom of God removes many difficulties, and takes us a long way towards the solution of the central problem.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE MODERN WORLD

Chapter VI

CHRISTIANITY IN THE MODERN WORLD

I

IN the earlier pages of this volume the endeavour was made to trace the present unsettlement of religious belief to its sources in the intellectual life of the age, and thereafter to show that the result had been to give the Personality and Mind of Jesus Christ a new reality and prominence in the Modern World.

From this the transition was made to a detailed discussion of those ground principles of Jesus in the light of which it is alone possible to understand Him, and also to understand the whole movement of thought in the New Testament. These principles, it is assumed, form the heart of every true Christian synthesis. It is not contended, of course, that they are the totality of New Testament truth. Rather are they only to be fully understood in the light of the Apostolic experience and the Apostolic thought. Yet, inasmuch as they lie at the foundations of the

Master's life they have a certain rightful priority and normative power. We must, I believe, start from them and regulate all our thoughts of God and the world and the soul by them, just as we find in the Character of our Lord the practical norm of conduct.

I endeavoured also, after stating these principles in some detail, to show the light which they cast on two of the difficulties which perplex earnest men at the present time, and keep them back from hearty faith in Jesus Christ,—the difficulty of apparent defect in the Christian Morality (and the difficulty that the Christian and the scientific views of the world are irreconcilable).

I propose, in this concluding chapter, to come to somewhat closer quarters with the peculiar practical problems of the present day, and to show how these principles of Jesus bear upon them and afford their only possible solution.

Parallel with the great intellectual movements which have been already described there have also been immense transformations in process in the Social and International Life of Mankind. None of these changes is more remarkable than that which has gradually brought the lower races of the world, first into economic, and then to a very large extent into political subordination to the more advanced peoples.

Up to the time of the discovery of the New

World, Christendom occupied a very small part of the surface of the globe. The eighteenth century was largely occupied, as Sir John Seeley has shown,[1] with the international struggle for the tropics and their trade, the temperate zones, the areas of the earth's surface best fitted for colonization by the white races of mankind. With the second half of the eighteenth century Great Britain entered on a new career, first of commercial, and then of political conquest, within the tropical zones, and since then the struggle for the tropics has underlain a very large proportion of her wars, and directed a very large part of her diplomacy. Mr. Kidd[2] has pointed out that this struggle for the control of the tropics has "taken the place of the struggle for the control of the temperate zones, which has been decided, on the whole, overwhelmingly in favour of the English-speaking peoples." It is, to begin with, a struggle for trade; but commercial influence under modern conditions, almost inevitably leads to political annexation, and so, within our days, the control of the inferior races by the more civilized has progressed with increasing rapidity. One whole continent has been divided, within human memory, by the great European Powers; the British Empire has annexed Burmah; China

[1] *Expansion of England.*
[2] *The Control of the Tropics.*

and Siam are threatened; the United States have taken over the Spanish possessions in the tropical zones of both hemispheres; Madagascar has been practically annexed by France, and in the South Pacific the rivalry of the European nations has more than once gravely imperilled their home relations.

The results of this vast economic movement can as yet only dimly be descried. What is perfectly obvious is that hundreds of millions of the less advanced peoples are being drawn into ever closer relations with their stronger neighbours, as the railheads creep through the forests and over the plains, and the network of cables expands on the ocean floor, and the speed of the great liners increases year by year. The causes which have produced this vast movement are operating still, and are likely to operate with increasing power as time goes on.

It is, moreover, an irrevocable step that has thus been taken. "The completion of this world process," says Mr. Bryce,[1] "is a specially great and fateful event, because it closes a page for ever. The conditions that are now vanishing can never recur. The civilized and semi-civilized races cannot relapse into their former isolation." The economic bonds which bind the lower and higher races together in this new and more intimate

[1] Romanes Lecture.

intercourse are too numerous and too strong to be ruptured. Human society, as a whole, has therefore entered on a new phase, which must have consequences of transcendent importance for the weal or woe of the human race. Mr. Bryce has further described the situation in forcible language: "It is hardly too much to say," he continues, "that for economic purposes all mankind is fast becoming one people, in which the hitherto backward nations are taking a place analogous to that which the unskilled workers have held in each one of the civilized nations. Such an event opens a new stage in world-history, a stage whose significance has, perhaps, been as yet scarcely realized either by the thinker or the man of action." [1]

Even those who look beneath the surface and discern the true course of events, often fail to realize the true gravity of the problem with which Christendom is confronted. We are apt to conclude that such a closer relation between the lower and higher races can only be for good, inasmuch as its inevitable effect will be to raise the lower races towards the level of the higher. But what guarantee have we that the lower will not rather drag the higher down towards their own level? Is it so certain that the moral gains of the higher races are so secure that they can be maintained in spite

[1] Romanes Lecture.

of all the dangers and temptations that contact with peoples of a weaker, and often of a debased type is certain to bring about ?

We have one great illustration in history of the danger in question in the days of the decline of the Roman Republic and the rise of the Roman Empire. On the one hand, the rapacity and tyranny of the Roman governing classes abroad led to the ruin of liberty at home ; while, on the other hand, Rome itself was flooded with the scum of the East. The speeches of Cicero give us one side of the story, and Juvenal and Tacitus the other. "In Tiberim defluxit Orontes." Religion and Morality alike became debased.

If this has happened once, why should it not happen again ? The injury done to the higher civilization may take to-day the same twofold form it did then. The direct contagion of the vices of barbarism or effete civilization may spread through the veins of Christendom : the master may learn the vices of the slave or freedman. But it is more probable that the evil will be of an indirect and subtle kind. If the higher races exploit the lower, sooner or later their own freedom will become a thing of the past, and the modern Free States, like the City of the Seven Hills, and for similar reasons, will retrograde from liberty to despotism.

Nothing, indeed, can be more certain than that

the enslavement or exploitation of weaker races finds its inevitable nemesis in the deterioration of the oppressor. That lesson is written plain on the broad page of human history. It was the sense of this that caused the gigantic struggle of the American Civil War. Behind all questions of State rights was the sense that there was in the very body of the people a huge growth that was foreign to its true life, and that must be excised even by the terrible surgery of civil war.

The only way in which the free peoples can govern the lower races without eventual loss of their own liberties is found when the ruling power is prepared to subordinate its own immediate interests to the common good, and steady persistence in such a course means remorseless antagonism to the greed of the moment and to all the more vulgar ambitions of private and national egotism. The real question, therefore, is whether or not the ruling races in our own day have attained sufficient moral force for the task they have assumed. If they have, the dangers may be all transcended, and a new and better epoch may be opened. If they have not, then we are entering on one of the most tragic ages of time. For good or evil, humanity is face to face with one of its greatest problems, and human foresight, unaided, cannot even pretend to pierce the mists which shroud the future.

Is it a mere accident or an evil fate that just at this moment Christendom should have been called, as it were, into the very presence of Jesus of Nazareth, and should be face to face with Him as no Christian century has been since the first? Is it for nothing that this Divine Apparition should have come forth once more before the eyes of men, that this Voice which speaks in such great accents of the infinite value of the human soul should have been heard anew by human ears? Is it for nothing that just when this great temptation has come to the rich and powerful peoples to treat the weaker and poorer as mere instruments of their avarice and lust and pride, the solemn shadow of the Cross should fall between, and just when the pride of earthly empire is at its highest the vision of the Divine Kingdom should turn its glories dim for all the keener eyes? What Christian man at least can believe it? To me, it seems wiser to say, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His Judgments and His ways past finding out!"

But it may be asked, What practical programme has the Christian Church, in the light of the new knowledge, for the present situation? What can it contribute to the solution of this tremendous world problem?

(1) First of all, the Churches must set them-

selves with a thoroughness and resolution hitherto unattained to the evangelization of the world.

In the light of the situation outlined above this is the only way to a radical solution. In spite of prejudice, apathy, and scorn, the missionary enterprise of Christianity has already asserted its place as a world factor; but it has by no means come to its right either within or without the Church. As the economic and political situation develops, and the new Christian synthesis of doctrine gains in security and strength, it is sure to acquire greater and greater prominence. It will become clearer and clearer as time goes on that, not only for the sake of the heathen peoples but for the sake of the higher races themselves, its success is a vital interest of humanity. There is no real hope, no radical solution to be found independently of this. The age of isolation is passing fast. The world is growing into an economic whole. For the moral health of mankind there must be no slums in the City of God.

Again we ask, Is it by pure hazard or adverse fate that, just at this particular crisis, the missionary enterprise should find a securer Theological basis in the restoration to its central place in Christian thought of the Idea of the Kingdom of God? It is not enough that so mighty an enterprise should rest upon the motive of compassion

alone, or on isolated texts or passages of the Sacred Writings. It must be shown to be involved in the very Idea of Christianity, so that a Christian life in which it has no place is almost as great a contradiction as one which is indifferent to the elementary virtues of the Christian moral Ideal. This, I take it, is what the practical application of the idea of the Kingdom implies. Of course the evangelization of the lower races, taken by itself, will not solve the problem. The United States is part of Christendom alike in its White States and its Black Belt, and yet it is face to face with a situation of heartbreaking difficulty, a *damnosa hereditas* of the utmost perplexity, in the relations of the higher and the lower races. Nevertheless, the situation would be infinitely worse than it is if the negroes were still heathen of the West African type.

(2) The Christianization of the lower races, therefore, implies not merely their evangelization, it implies also their training and discipline in Christian civilization.

There are some to-day who believe that the world can be evangelized in this generation; but there is no one who dreams that the other process can be accomplished save through many generations. Nevertheless, all who are acquainted with the literature of the subject know of the progress that has already been made. Dr. Dennis's

volumes[1] on the Sociology of Christian Missions show how inevitably the evangelizing movement passes into the sociological phase. The reasons for this are plain, but in view of the next stage of the argument, it will be necessary to dwell for a little upon them.

Let us suppose, for the moment, that a missionary goes to the foreign field imbued with the individualist conception of salvation. He believes that, inasmuch as it is his business only to preach the salvation of souls, he must confine himself to that, and to the training of converts in the regenerating truths of his Gospel. After prolonged labour he sees some results, the converts are baptized, and a Christian community begins to grow up around him. But he soon finds that these converts are not in the same position as converts at home. All around them lies a heathen environment, which calls them with a myriad voices which they understand only too well. They have been brought up perhaps in the zenana or harem; they breathe the tainted atmosphere of a society whose customs are shot through and through with heathen ideas; they are ostracized by their caste, or tribal warfare renders the very foundations of their society insecure; their untrained minds are intimidated

[1] *Christian Missions and Social Progress.*

by the prestige of heathen learning, or are the prey to superstitious terrors of sorcery or witchcraft. Nor do these forces act only on the minds of native Christians. The missionary soon realizes that they are one great obstacle to the gaining of converts. Hence Christian missions pass speedily into the sociological stage. The endeavour is now made to create a Christian environment, to abolish polygamy, to put down slavery, to moralize existing institutions, to raise schools, colleges, and technical institutions, and, in a word, to create Christian commonwealths, which may be prosperous spiritual provinces of a world-wide Kingdom of God. The aim, in short, to reach the individual soul inevitably expands into an endeavour to create a society imbued with the spirit of Christ. The former aim must come first and remain first, but without this expansion it is powerless to gain its complete ends.

It is only then in the success of this twofold Christian enterprise that there can be any real hope of radically solving the problem before human society at the present time. Before it mere secular statesmanship stands helpless. It needs forces which are not at its command, and which only the Christian Church can supply. For both phases of that enterprise, the evangelizing and the moralizing of the lower races, the Theolo-

gical development, as we have seen, has prepared the way.

(3) But that same development has also brought to the front another aspect of the Church's duty.

If we are to be in earnest with the Kingdom of God, we must insist that the whole policy of the Christian State towards the lower races shall be in harmony with the Christian Ideal.

The Church does not want the aid of the State in her specific work of the evangelizing of the lower peoples; she is incomparably better without it. But she has the right and the duty to insist that the State shall not abuse its power over these peoples at the dictation of private greed or national vanity. She is committed to war to the death against all attempts, for example, to bring back slavery on any pretext, or to tolerate the exploitation of the weaker peoples by the strong. She must use all her resources to insist that the higher nations shall govern the lower only in the interest of the common good. The signs are many and sinister that a stern and prolonged conflict is here advancing upon her which may well take rank with the great fights of history, the fights of the soul, of which wars are but incidents, and which are dated not by years but by centuries. It is only by the Christian Church facing the situation in all its breadth and intricacy, and realizing it in

all its gravity, that the dangers can be transcended and the victory won.

It is true that the solution here indicated, which includes the spiritual regeneration and moralization of the lower races, lies far outside the ken of most of our statesmen and publicists, as it lies far beyond the immediate horizon within which their thoughts and purposes move. But the deeper and more enduring forces in history are making towards it, and in the great movement of religious thought outlined in the earlier part of this volume, we can discern the slow formation of a new religious synthesis adapted to the moral necessities of the coming age. Just as throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we can discern many hidden forces preparing the new synthesis of thought and belief on which our modern democratic life rests; "just as we can descend, at once, as it were, beneath the surface of things into a region of twilight, where, as in a vast workshop, we see, being slowly extended, the great framework of principles on which the modern theory of Society has been reared,"[1] so here, throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, we can discern a similar process, the slow birth of new ideals, the gathering force of new motives, the increasing sense of a new Divine Call.

[1] Kidd's *Principles of Western Civilization.*

II

We pass now to the consideration of a new phase of the modern world-problem, the inner social condition of the nations of Western Christendom.

We have seen that, within the religious sphere, there has been throughout the more progressive nations of the world a widespread anarchy of religious belief. When we turn to the economic sphere, we find a similar anarchy consequent upon the break-up of the dominant economic orthodoxy. The view of that economic orthodoxy in its classical form was elaborated in its main outlines by Adam Smith, Malthus, and Ricardo. With wonderful ability and tenacity these thinkers slowly elaborated their analysis of production, distribution, and exchange; of the true meaning of rent, profits and interest; and of the laws of population; and, on the basis of this analysis the endeavour was made to establish a practical science, whose leading idea was that the welfare of the whole community was best subserved by leaving every individual worker in the great labour-house of industry free to seek his own private interest, the sole function of the State, economically regarded, being to take measures that each individual should observe due respect for the like freedom of others.

Briefly put, the panacea of the orthodox political economy was unfettered competition, with

the State holding the ring to see that the combatants observed the rules of the game. These rules of the game, it was held by many, rested on the natural rights of man. The rights of property, bequest, and inheritance, of free contract, and so on, were his by nature, and perfect economic freedom was their legitimate consequence. The great dialectic victory which the orthodox political economy won over the fallacies and blunders of the "Mercantile System," with the wonderful expansion of wealth that followed the breaking of the shackles of the past, which that victory effected, gave that economic orthodoxy an astonishing prestige in the England of half a century ago. Political economy for a time seemed to have justified its claim to be a true science, and its maxims were believed to be the sum of political wisdom. All that was needed, it was believed by many, was to familiarize the masses with its principles and deductions, and they would accept their lot, as men accept the laws of Nature, and endeavour to conform their lives accordingly.

But meantime, the conscience of the country was slowly awakening to the enormous evils which were incident to unlimited industrial competition. Lord Shaftesbury's life-long crusade against the evils of the system, and the rise of the great Trades' Unions, with the protracted industrial strifes which they caused, and the restrictive

legislation which they succeeded in carrying for the benefit of the workers, demonstrated the practical impossibility of the Economist Gospel in a democratic age. Carlyle and Ruskin poured eloquent scorn on the sordid ideals of the plutocracy of their day, and adumbrated cloudy visions of a nobler order which had a great influence on the educated youth of their time.

Yet from these sources there was more heat than light, and it was always open to the orthodox economist to appeal to his deductions and statistics, and to regard all this angry protest as simply another instance of the old story of the revolt of the heart against the head.

But, as so often happens, the "heart" was not long in justifying its rebellion, the social evils of the existing order compelled a deeper search into the foundations of that political economy which sought to justify and perpetuate it. The great movements of thought, which, as we saw, have acted so powerfully on theology, came with the same unsettling influence into the realm of political economy. Science brought the conception of Evolution into Sociology, Philosophy contributed theories of the State and of Morals, and Historical research, working with these new categories, showed that what had been assumed to be "natural rights," and therefore sacrosanct, were really juridical institutions,

which had been wrought out by society in the past with a view to its security and strength under different conditions from those which now prevailed. The conceptions and ideals which society had formed under totally different conditions, society, under the new industrial order, it was argued, was perfectly free to discard or transform, if it could be shown that such transformation would be to the advantage of its common life.

Gradually the orthodox political economy has yielded to the influence of these solvents. The *laisser faire* principle is now generally admitted to be inadequate to the solution of the social problem. "*Freiheit ist keine Lösung*," and, with that growing conviction, the present order has become increasingly unstable. So long as the old economic orthodoxy prevailed, a certain measure of stability was possible. So long as the State held the ring, Capital proved itself abundantly able to hold its own in its recurring conflicts with Labour. But the whole position is altered when the State interferes in the conflict. If Labour becomes able, through the increasingly democratic constitution of the nation, to bring the mighty power of the State in its behalf into the arena, few can doubt what the result will be, at least for a time.

Now, the principle of State intervention has been admitted, has been acted upon to a very

large extent already, and is likely to be acted upon to an even greater degree. Society is plainly *en route*. But, we ask, *en route* to what? The coherent stable economic orthodoxy has been abandoned; the principle of State intervention has been admitted; with every year the democracy becomes better educated, better organized, and more conscious of its material interests and political power. Meantime, the cleavage between Capital and Labour becomes deeper. There is, it is to be feared, increasing alienation and suspicion between employers and employed. This comes to light in many ways, of which the constantly recurring labour wars are only one indication. The spirit of revolutionary socialism is obviously on the increase among the workmen, and where the struggle for existence is keenest and the forces of Conservatism strong, this takes the form of Anarchism.

Towards what changes does all this social unrest tend? Many think that it tends towards the complete transformation of the present competitive anarchy into a co-operative organization of society, labouring for common ends.

Revolutionary Socialism would effect this at a stroke, whilst the "purified Socialism,"[1] with a better understanding of human society and human nature, would bring it about by a gradual

[1] See Kirkup's *History of Socialism*, ch. xi., ed. 1900.

transformation of existing institutions. With the general view that the co-operative order will ultimately supplant the competitive order, the writer of this volume is in full accord. That the time for this has come, or that it is even within measurable distance, he is unable to see.

The cardinal difficulty which lies in the way of the co-operative commonwealth is that the individuals of whom it would be composed are not moralized up to the point at which it would be a workable order of society. Ethically, the co-operative idea is unquestionably higher than the competitive. Practically, it would demand from its citizens an intelligence and a self-sacrifice, of which they are not yet capable.

Supposing, therefore, that the experiment of a Socialist State were tried (a supposition which is likely enough), the more advanced spirits in it would require to coerce the lower and more backward in order to prevent it from falling to pieces, and society would lose in liberty more than it gained in other respects. Nor could the system even then be permanently maintained. Force is no remedy, just as mere freedom is no solution. Reaction would triumph, and nemesis would once more overtake premature revolution. We may take an illustration from another sphere to bring out the real nature of the difficulty. We may hold that Democracy is, on the whole, the

highest type of government, and yet the most convinced democrat amongst us would not dream of introducing universal suffrage and representative institutions in the India of to-day. India being what it is, we know that the resulting evils would outweigh the advantages, until reaction triumphed over corruption and anarchy, and the old bureaucracy, or an absolutism of a more drastic cast, sat again in the place of power.

We stand to-day, then, if the argument be sound, in this position. The old régime of pure *laisser faire* has been proved impracticable. Its intellectual basis has been undermined, and many of its inevitable consequences have outraged the conscience of all civilized and Christian states, which have all, to a greater or less degree, set about the task of producing a better order by means inconsistent with its principles.

But the opposing ideal of a co-operative commonwealth is also, in the meantime, impracticable. Civilized man has got beyond *laisser faire*, but he is not ready for the co-operative commonwealth. Freedom is no solution, but force is no remedy, and, therefore, as has been said, we find the same unrest and anarchy in the economic sphere as we have found in the religious world. Society in our time is

> Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other, powerless to be born,

and experiences all the misery and unrest of such a state to the full. Shall it go back to the régime of pure competition with its enormous disparities of wealth, its women and child slaves, its ruthless exploitation of the lower races? Surely to retrace its steps thus would not be to get any nearer to the City of God. Shall it plunge forward into a new social order, in which the means of production are controlled by all, and each receives an amount of the produce in accordance with his "needs," and wealth and poverty are alike extinguished? Even those who feel most keenly the wrongs of the present order, and the rights of the deserving poor, may feel that such an issue would be fraught with more evil than good. Shall we then be content with the existing order, with its "submerged tenth," its many millions who live just above the hunger line, its increasing class antagonisms, its economic anarchy and instability? Surely none of these courses is—possible, and yet it is difficult to see any other. Western society seems to have reached an *impasse.*

The root of the whole evil and perplexity lies in our egoistic and materialistic ideas of the Good. The *laisser faire* order rests upon the idea that if every man seeks first his own material interest, the result will be the greatest possible good to the common weal. Revolutionary socialism of the

Marx school and the Gotha type, which may fairly be taken as the representative form of the Revolutionary Socialism of to-day,[1] is a revolt against this order in the name of the secular interests of the labouring classes. It claims, on their behalf, a share of the good things of this life proportioned to the "needs" of each. Its basis is as materialistic and egoistic as that of the older economists. Its assumption is that the endeavour to secure this share will result in the common good, an assumption which may readily be shown to be unfounded. In truth we can never reach a noble and harmonious type of society if we start from the idea that the true good for man consists in material things, or that it is to be attained from the motive power of private secular interest in any shape or form. On such a view one of two alternatives must be chosen: (*a*) the sum of good things being limited, and population tending naturally to increase against those limits, there must, therefore, always be a fight for this limited sum; or else, (*b*) if we fix on the principle that each shall have a share according to his needs, the effect will be that the sum total to be divided will fall off, population will require to be compulsorily limited, and men's liberties trenched on at every turn. Either way, we have tyranny and slavery as the only possible outcome of selfish-

[1] See Kirkup's *History of Socialism*.

ness and materialism. So long as the individual is dominated by his own personal interests, so long is it impossible that a truly noble society can exist.

What is there to surprise us in such a conclusion? Have nations ever been great except by virtue of their possessing citizens who were willing to subordinate their private interest to the public good? Is not the great palace hall of history, in all its dim recesses and sunlit spaces, hung with the portraits and adorned with the statues, and blazoned with the names of those who lived and died for interests greater than their own? Even those splendid and sinister figures who have risen by genius rather than by virtue in the ages of militarism, have so risen only by the self-devotion of the masses which followed them. No people has ever become great without sacrifice. Is it not probable, then, to say the least, that the economic side of man's life must own the sway of the same law as is illustrated throughout the length and breadth of his military and political history?

The crying need of our own age in the industrial sphere is the deepening and diffusion of the sense of the Common Good.

Without this, we shall have nothing but clashing interests, industrial wars, economic tyranny and slavery, jealousy, hatred, futile revolutions and ruined Utopias. Without it, we have no

prospect of any industrial peace save such as is produced by the rule of force. The one hope of better days lies in the moralizing of industry by the spread of a new and deeper conception of the Common Good. If it were possible to imbue capitalist and labouring class alike with this motive, the whole sordid struggle would change its character, a progressive *concordat* between them would be established, and society would enter on a new and nobler epoch. Suppose that the capitalist could be brought to view his work as a social function, and his gains as a trust bestowed upon him for the public good. Suppose that the labourer viewed his work as public service, and were able to look upon his wages as controlled in amount by the same consideration of public advantage; suppose that devotion to the common weal became a passion in the sphere of economic life, as it has often been historically under militarism, would not the whole situation be radically changed? The sting would be taken out of labour troubles, and the poison out of the blood of the social organism. Social inequalities would remain, but there would be reason in them which could be recognized by the reason of the individual.

It is only in such a moral transformation that I can see any hope of deliverance from present and impending perils. "What is now most

urgent," says Professor Ingram,[1] "is not legislative interference on any large scale with the industrial relations, but the formation, in both the higher and the lower regions of the industrial world, of profound convictions as to social duties, and some more effective mode than at present exists of diffusing, maintaining and applying those convictions." These are true words. The purely spiritual task has the first place. But while this is so, the deepening and expanding sense of the Common Good must also express itself within the home sphere of Christendom, as we have seen that it must do in the foreign sphere of missionary propaganda, in institutional, customary and legislative changes. Moral progress among the individual members of a people inevitably implies social change, whether that change be of a negative and destructive kind like the abolition of slavery, or constructive like the great educational measures of the last century.

Now it is absurd to suppose that the political and legislative *status quo* is inspired throughout by the Idea of the Common Good. Much of it is the expression simply of class interests or of obsolete privilege, and, therefore, it is certain either to disappear as the moral temper of the nations ad-

[1] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, article on the "History of Political Economy." Republished as a separate volume.

vances, or to arrest them in their onward progress.

Nor can the present economic order be deemed sacrosanct any more than the political. It rests, as we have seen, on the idea of competition, and it will probably rest on that uneasy basis for a long time to come. So long as the average individual remains as morally undeveloped and as unenlightened as he is, so long will he need the spur of competition to make him do his best work for the Common Good. In the interest, then, of that Common Good, and in view of the immaturity of man, it is better that that competitive system should be retained than that it should be suddenly destroyed, and men thrust into a new type of social order, for which they are not, as yet, ready.

But the acceptance of the competitive order, on this footing, it is plain, is a very different thing from its acceptance as something permanently essential to society, and therefore sacrosanct against check or control. The practical Christian man may accept it, on the same principle as Paul accepted slavery, or as the modern Christian accepts the needs for armies and fleets and occasional wars. His true course is to accept it, as in the meantime, conditioned by human imperfection, and not to be violently overthrown without greater evils than its present existence entails. Meantime he holds it to be his duty to regulate it and to humanize it, in so far as he can thereby

best serve the Common Good. "Competition," as Arnold Toynbee has said,[1] "may be compared to a stream whose strength and direction have to be observed, that embankments may be thrown up within which it may do its work harmlessly and beneficially." Mr. Spencer has shown how difficult it is to do this without causing greater evils than those which it is sought to remove; but his argument [2] really proves nothing further, and is assuredly far from being the rehabilitation of *laisser faire* which it is meant to be.

Acceptance of competition on this practical basis further leaves the way open for aspiration after and labour for the coming of a better order of society based on the nobler principle of association, when men shall no longer waste their energies in struggle with one another, but shall be able to turn their united forces on the conquest of Nature. Not till then will the great principle of the Common Good find its complete expression. Meantime, the true line of economic and legislative progress will be found in realizing that principle whenever it shall be found practicable, in framing laws and institutions not with a view to vested interests or revolutionary selfishness, but with a steady view to the Common Good. At every point such

[1] *History of the Industrial Revolution of the Eighteenth Century.*

[2] *Man* versus *the State.*

social and institutional changes, if they are to be enduring and salutary, should rest upon that moral transformation of individual ideas on which all future progress depends, and which consists in man's advance from thinking about his rights to thinking about his duties, from interests to functions, from egoisms and private interests to thinking about the Common Good.

From what possible source, we now ask, can such a transformation come ?

It cannot be hoped for from the progress of secular education alone. Education, as the recent course of events in Germany has shown, may be an explosive rather than a consolidating force. An educated democracy is far less likely to put up with its lot under the régime of capitalism, and is much more able to attain the solidarity and discipline which are needful for the capture of the mechanism of the State, than one which is untrained. Yet such a solidarity and discipline, while sufficient for a victorious political campaign against the present power-holding classes, comes far short of that enduring and wide-spread devotion to the Common Good which can alone ensure the existence of a stable and yet progressive order of society throughout the ages. Nor, on the other hand, has the superior education of the moneyed and power-holding classes proved able to beget in them that high-minded and dis-

interested devotion to the Common Good of which we are in search.

Nor have Philosophy and Science historically shown themselves able to mould and sway great masses of people, or to initiate and sustain such moral revolutions as the present crisis demands. The great crusades of humanity have never been led by the sage, but by the prophet. Political reform has already done its part in the social evolution, and no improvement of political machinery can now be of any primary importance in the more advanced countries.

Nor, I submit, can the change be brought about by any purely ethical movement, divorced from the appeal to the tremendous sanctions of the Divine Judgment and Mercy, and the powers of the world to come.

What is wanted is something which will appeal not only to the desire for moral beauty and perfection, but something which will invest the ideal in its loveliness with awful and commanding power. The work to be done is too vast to be accomplished by anything but by that power which has been the great historical force in the making of nations, the power of Religion. Historical investigation has only brought out with increasing clearness the immense part which Religion has played in the past in the national and social life of man. It has shown that the classi-

cal civilizations rested upon a religious basis, and that they fell with its disintegration. It has shown that the Roman Empire was unable to maintain its huge structure on the incoherent eclectic synthesis which formed its religious basis in its first centuries, and, in its need, turned to the religion which it had persecuted. It has shown how, in the terrific hurricane of the barbarian invasions, the Catholic synthesis of Christianity formed the basis of the new social order. It has shown how, out of the faith of Islam, there arose the great Mohammedan nations. The same thesis could be abundantly proved to be true, did space allow, for the great nations of modern days.

What is the meaning of this constantly recurring historical phenomenon? Surely it is this, that there are in human nature tendencies to egoism, which, however useful they may have been in man's dim barbaric, half-animal past, are now, if unchecked, anti-social; and that Religion with its tremendous sanctions has the power, which no other force possesses, of checking and transforming these influences, so that it makes the creation and the working of great social aggregates not only possible but actual. Hence Religion has always been the mother of nations. Every new religion has either created a new type of society, or has transformed the old. No strong

and enduring form of society has ever existed without Religion.

If there is, then, to be any deliverance from the present social *impasse*, history justifies us in believing that that deliverance will come from Religion. A distinguished modern writer, Professor Alfred Marshall, has put in the forefront of his well-known work on the *Principles of Economics* the statement that "the two great forming agencies in the world's history have been the Religious and the Economic. Here and there the ardour of the military or the artistic spirit has been for a while predominant, but religious and economic influences have nowhere been displaced from the front rank even for a time; and they have nearly always been more important than all others put together." It would seem to follow from this that the cardinal problem of civilization is to get these Religious and Economic factors into right relations with one another. This, in truth, is the real problem of our age, the problem which underlies all others. The student of the present economic situation who has reached the conclusion above indicated, that the root cause of the evils and dangers of Society to-day lies in the materialism and egoism of the individual, and that the one hope for a better order lies in the deepening and diffusion of the Idea of the Common Good, and who raises the further inquiry

as to how this spiritualizing of ideals can be attained, is therefore driven to the conclusion that the one great hope for Society lies in that Power which has been the mother of all great civilizations, the Power which lays its stern and ennobling restraints upon the private and class antagonisms which would otherwise shatter Society into its constituent atoms—the mighty power of Religion.

But history also shows that mighty as is the power for good of a great religion, its power for evil is sometimes almost equally great. Great national tragedies have been caused by the arrest which a reactionary religion lays upon the progressive life of a people, or by the revolt of these progressive forces not only from traditional religion but from Religion in all its forms. The history of Spain furnishes an illustration of the former of these cases, and that of revolutionary France of the latter. It is plain, therefore, that everything depends on the adequacy of the religious synthesis to meet the real moral and spiritual wants of the age, and to master and harmonize its wild living forces.

It is the argument of these chapters that all the varied forces of religious thought enumerated in their earlier pages have been working towards the maturing of such a form of the Christian synthesis, a form adapted to the practical needs of Society at the present time

Such a process has many analogies in history. What was it that enabled Judah to transcend the social and political cataclysm of the Captivity? It was the Prophetic synthesis which had been slowly elaborated during the preceding centuries. Without this faith Judah would have disappeared as the Ten Tribes disappeared, and as the vanished peoples disappeared whom Assyria trampled in the dust. What was it again that preserved social order and intellectual life in the frightful storms of the Barbarian invasions in the days of the wreck of the Roman Empire? It was the Catholic synthesis of Christianity, with the ecclesiastical structure conformed to it, which had been slowly elaborated in the first centuries of the Christian era. Little as they knew it, Origen and Cyprian were getting ready for Alaric and Genseric and Attila. What was it, finally, that underlay the rise of the great free nations of modern days, with their civil and religious liberties, their industrial energy, their colonizing power? It was the new Christian synthesis of Wittemberg and Geneva. Every phase of civilization rests upon ideas, and ideas of the social order are generated by Religion under the influence of the intellectual environment of the time.

We turn then in the present strait and danger of Society to ask what is the form of the Christian synthesis which is emerging from the long toil of

thought of the last century? Is it one which is adapted to the needs of the present age, one which will consecrate the idea of the Common Good and invest it with the awful and commanding power which Religion alone can bring? The answer to that question has already been given implicitly in what has already been said. We have seen that the whole progress of thought has been towards the bringing into new prominence of the historical Personality of Christ, and with it of the spiritual ideas in which He lived and moved and had His being. We have seen that one of these great master ideas was that of the Kingdom of God as the supreme end of God alike in the way of Providence and in the way of Grace, and of man in the way of endeavour and devotion. To that Kingdom, as Christ conceived it, every Christian man is to consecrate himself absolutely, and to cast the burden of his personal interests and anxieties simply on the Heavenly Father's care.

Take this idea of the Christian life out into our modern world. Suppose every Christian man and woman in downright earnest with it, seeking to carry it out in all its breadth and fulness in the life of modern society and the modern state, prepared to live and die for the realization of that Kingdom of God. The result, in proportion to the number of Christians, would be the transformation of the whole economic situation in the direction

which we have seen to be vitally necessary to deliverance from present and impending evils and to future progress. The problem would be solved. The religious idea would generate the civic spirit. We should have that deepening and diffusion of the civic spirit which we have seen to be the crying want of our time.

There are many to whom such a correlation of the spheres of religion and of the political and economic side of human life may appear strange and unnatural. They think that there is no deep and intimate relation between the spiritual and the secular life of man. It is a complete mistake. Our modern ideas of civil liberty, for example, are in the last resort rooted in the Reformation. From the moment when the Reformers swept away all that came between the individual soul and its Creator, asserted the full rights of the humblest human being to unrestricted communion with God through Christ, and laid upon him the burden and glory of responsibility to the Supreme for the gift of Eternal Life, from that hour political liberty became inevitable. The religious truth wrought itself out in the political and economic sphere by virtue of the unity of the soul. Religious conviction generated the spirit of Liberty.[1] So, too, the great principle of the reli-

[1] See Lord Acton's *Study of History* for the enforcement of this statement, a testimony of a remarkable kind

gious solidarity of mankind in Christ, implied in the idea of the Kingdom of God, inevitably carries with it the principle of a new social order in which the idea of private interest will be not negated, but taken up into the larger idea of the Common Good, and rights at last be harmonized with duties.

Let men beware of how they admit a great religious idea into the hidden recesses of the heart! It is the seed from which innumerable undreamed-of harvests may spring. What amazing social changes, what wars, revolutions, empires, commonwealths, lay in that single idea of the priesthood of all believers, of justification by faith alone! Luther taught that it was "the article of a standing or a falling Church." Modern history has taught that it is the article of a standing or a falling society. The demonstration of that truth has cost the human race not a little toil and not a little blood. The price was worth paying, but it has been heavy.

Even so let men beware of the Idea of the Kingdom. At present it is in the hands and hearts mainly of teachers of religion, but its day may come in the great open field. Revolutions may be in it which will make the earth shake and ring, wars which will convulse world society, great commonwealths on a vaster and nobler

from a Roman Catholic historical scholar of profound erudition.

scale than the world has ever known, at the last, perhaps, a new world order of social and industrial peace.

But we need not forecast the far future now. It will be enough if attention has been directed to the economic significance of the new Christian synthesis, which is, as yet, very imperfectly realized among us. The Christian Society alone holds the key to the situation in our modern economic world conflict. It alone is able to discharge the function which Comte ascribed to the "Spiritual Power," which is to moralize capital by teaching the capitalist to think of his duties rather than his rights; and, on the other hand, to avert the dangers which the author of *Natural Religion* describes with such impressive force as arising from the revolt of the disinherited classes, who are coming to hold that "happiness is a fixed thing within easy reach of all, and that Civilization is the mass of frauds by which it is appropriated by the few," and who are therefore on the eve of "a vast rebellion against the whole system, or law, way of viewing the universe or worship, which lies at the basis of the civilized world."[1]

Nothing, it seems to me, can be more hopeless than to relegate this dual office, with Comte, to a

[1] *Natural Religion*, by Sir John Seeley.

spiritual power on the basis of a manufactured "Religion of Humanity," or, with Professor Seeley, to the teachers of a "Natural Religion." They have accurately diagnosed the needs of the age, but the remedies which they suggest are of the most unsatisfactory kind. For the great spiritual struggle before us only one Power is sufficient, the Power which has already been the source of many civilizations, and which, I believe, is rising in its pristine vigour, unwearied and undaunted, to begin a new era grander than any in its memorable past.

But the very clearness with which these distinguished thinkers have discerned the social needs of the present age, and the very hopelessness of the religions which they have extemporized to meet these needs, should be a stirring summons to the Christian Church to show that the faith by which it stands is more than adequate to the necessities of the time, and that it has in it reserve forces of truth and power which have never been fully called into play. Some of the most striking passages in *Natural Religion* are those in which the writer complains that the authorized spiritual teachers of the time have so little light to give on the great and critical questions of the social life of the age, because religion has become a thing of the individual life alone. "What is wanted," he says, "is the rise of a new order of

teachers whose business it would be to investigate and to teach the true relation of man to the universe and to society, the true Ideal he should worship, the course which the history of mankind has taken hitherto, in order that upon a full view of what is possible and desirable men should live and organize themselves for the future. In short, the modern Church is to do what Hebrew Prophecy in its fashion did for the Jews, and what Bishops and Popes did according to their lights for the Roman world when it laboured in the tempest, and for barbaric tribes first submitting themselves to be taught."

Matters have, no doubt, improved since *Natural Religion* was written, but surely there is here a criticism and a plea which the Church of our day would do well to lay to heart. The problems with which Society is now face to face are vaster, in some respects, than those which confronted either Hebrew Prophecy or the early Catholic Church. Does the Church as a whole realize this? Does she understand the greatness of the hour? Have her thinkers and teachers and organizers faced these problems with an adequate sense of their overshadowing importance, their incomparably greater moment than many of the questions which consume so much of their time and attention at the present day?

It is, no doubt, true that the first interest

of the Christian Church is the salvation and training of the individual soul, that the beginning and foundation of all things in the new life is to get the human spirit into right relations with God. But what we have seen to be true of the missionary propaganda, that the "conversion of sinners and the edification of saints" depends, under God, largely on the social and moral environment, is true of the home work of the Church as well. It is mere blindness to act as if there need be any rivalry between individual and social salvation. They are not rivals, they are correlatives; and throughout the New Testament itself the perfected salvation of the individual is always regarded as inseparably associated with the coming of the Kingdom of God.

So too, Comte's demand for a new "spiritual power" should be a summons to the Christian Church to consider whether its present organization is adequate to the needs of its time and the grandeur and urgency of its mission. If the Christian religion is to play the great part in the future that it is called to play, in mediating between class and class, between nation and nation, and in the conversion, moralization and protection of the backward races of the earth, it must rise above its present divisions. Good men must rise above all their differences that are not due to matters of vital moment, must unite and

identify themselves with the cause of God. It is, no doubt, the increasing sense of the magnitude and difficulty of this task of the Christian Churches that has been slowly operating for union in England and Scotland during the last fifty years ; but very much remains to be done if Christianity is to regain the lapsed masses in our populous cities, and reap the rich harvest fields of heathendom, and stand strong and independent in the great social strifes that lie before us. The task which lies before it is indeed one of the utmost difficulty, and is likely to demand all the reserve forces of wisdom and devotion which it possesses—*and more.* It is a question if ever in all its long history Christianity has had a greater task laid upon it than to-day ; a question if ever, even in the days when, amid the wreck of Society in the northern hurricanes, it laid the foundations of a new world, even in the days, again, of the great Reformation and the frightful conflicts which followed, it has had to face so testing a struggle as that which is now advancing upon us. But if the task is hard, the labour is a glorious one. Character may rise to grand heights yet before the work is done, and if it be well done the whole world of Christendom will enter upon a nobler phase of social life, and a new chapter be added to the history of Christianity not unworthy of its wonderful origin and past.

III

One great order of the problems of modern civilization remains to be considered. We have examined those involved in the relations of the lower to the higher races, and those involved in the internal social organization of the Western peoples. There remains the question of the relations between the more advanced nations, the international relations of Christendom.

Here, as elsewhere, we find great present evils and formidable dangers ahead. The traveller through modern Europe finds the nations everywhere armed to the teeth. The roads are planned and measured for the passage of armies and cannon. The great Casernes are crowded with conscripts, the roll of musketry resounds from the firing ranges in forest glade and open field, the recruits are drilled and marched and countermarched on the dusty parades and the wide stubble fields. The Great Powers are one and all groaning under the burden of militarism. In the time of peace they are hampered in their moralization and political evolution alike by their unproductive outlays and by the necessary stiffening of the national framework which militarism entails, and besides this there is the constant danger of war on an incredibly destructive scale. The systems of alliance which have sprung up have only warded off the danger at the expense of

aggravating its threatening horrors. The nightmare of a general war makes the peace of Europe but a troubled slumber. The lurid vision of the Apocalypse seems ever on the point of fulfilment: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid-heaven, 'Come and be gathered together unto the great supper of God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.'"

Can we ascribe these evils to any one main cause? Yes, their foundation cause is unquestionably that materialistic and selfish view of the true good which we found to underlie the industrial evils of the time. If the central interest of men lies in material and private good, then inasmuch as there is only a limited amount of that good obtainable, the principle of division can only be that of conflict. Wars simply represent the animal struggle for existence carried up into the human sphere. The Caserne, the Krupp and Creusot guns, the ironclad and torpedo are the result of Science and superior social organization directed to the same ends as the savage reached by the flint arrowhead and club, and Nature by the hawk's talon and the serpent's fang.

Are we to regard this state of matters, then, as an integral part of the permanent order of Society, as fixed as the great astronomical facts and laws? On this view we have simply to accept international jealousies and strifes as an enduring fact of nature, and our problem will be how to enable the individual and the nation to live as Christian a life as is possible within these iron limits. Such seems to be the prevailing opinion to-day among practical men. Pessimists appeal to universal human history and say that it proves that warfare, being due to ineradicable human passions, must simply be accepted as inevitable. The same old story that is blazoned with barbaric pride on the shattered ruins of Assyrian palaces and along the dim colonnades of the temples of the Nile, is written also among the sunny cornfields and vineyards and forest glades of the great Aceldamas of modern Europe. The vision of a warless earth seems visionary indeed in an age when the struggle for existence is so keen :—

"Warless, when her tens are thousands, and her thousands millions, then
All her harvests all too narrow, who can picture warless men?"

Is it reasonable that with universal precedent against us we should even hope for universal peace? That depends upon our world-view. Christianity cannot admit of pessimism here any more than elsewhere. It believes that the kind

of facts that human nature presents are not of the same order as the facts of the physical universe. You cannot redeem a cyclone or regenerate a volcano, but it is otherwise with the soul of a man. Pessimism which rests upon the assumption that the precedents of history must control its hopes for the future, and that human nature is incapable of modification, would have strangled American Abolitionism at its birth, would arrest the missionary enterprise, and would, in a word, be the death of every great crusade for the nobler life of man. Such pessimism has its uses. It should remind us of the enormous difficulties in the way, the need not only for heroism and devotion, but for clear-sighted measurement of the realities of the situation, and, above all, for Divine aid ; but, taken by itself, it is the negation of the living God.

The whole of our preceding argument carries us further. If there be any force in its earlier stages, it applies here also. The main cause of the international danger, as has been said, is that which has produced the social strife within the limits of the nation. In the wider arena the situation is further complicated by two contributory causes, the existence of the barriers of nationality and the absence of any international polity akin to what has been elaborated in the narrower sphere.

Take now the main cause, the materialistic and selfish view of the national good. If the sum of good things to be divided is necessarily too small to satisfy the claimants, increasing in a smaller ratio than their numbers, and being allocated by anarchic struggle alone, then recurring wars are inevitable. But this compendious formula is simply an application to the international situation of a theory of Society that we have seen reason to distrust in the national sphere. If the formula is adequate for the international situation it must be adequate also for the nation, and, in that case, we should be back in the old *laisser faire* epoch with all its horrors, and should have nothing before us but a class struggle of increasing bitterness. But if we refuse to admit this, if we believe that national society may be kept efficient, and yet progressively moralized by an increasing sense of the identity of the Common and Individual good effected by the might of Religion, we must apply the same principles to the solution of the international problem.

If there can be such a thing as a common national good, there must be also an international good, a universal good. If there be not such a good, what becomes of the claim of Christianity to be a universal religion? Every universal religion contains in itself the implicit possibility of an international *concordat*; but if we elimin-

ate the religious factor from our analysis of the present situation and forecast of the future the outlook is dreary indeed. The task here, as in the national sphere, is nothing short of the moralization of man, and if man's interests be simply material and temporal, the hope of persuading him to forgo them for the sake of the common weal is of the most visionary kind. But if he knows himself to be a son of God, and an immortal being, the whole conditions of the problem are altered. His nature becomes plastic to the tremendous sanctions of the Divine Law, and, in the grasp of Eternity, he becomes capable of such abnegations and heroisms as life in a noble and progressive society demands of all its members. It is, then, in Religion, and in Religion alone, that the hope lies of such a transformation of the individual as can render an international *concordat* possible, just as it is in Religion alone that the hope of true national progress lies.

The main cause of the evils in the narrower and in the wider sphere being thus identical, the remedy in both cases is the same. But as has been said, the international situation is complicated by conditions from which the national situation is free.

(1) The first of these is the influence of nationality.

At present the fact of nationality is one of the great barriers in the way of an associated human-

ity. However keen the social strife may be within each nation between the different classes, there is here far more possibility of a common understanding and sympathy than there would be if to the social difference there were added the complex differences of blood, and language, and traditions, and often of religions, which differentiate the great nationalities of Christendom. Hence the international problem is much more entangled than the national.

It is not surprising that Tolstoy, with his deep sense of the evils of modern civilization, should pour savage scorn on what he considers the obsolete pseudo-virtue of patriotism as the source of innumerable falsehoods and miseries. Yet when one remembers what the sense of nationality has done, not only in the far past of history, when Tolstoy admits that it had a place, but what it has done, and is doing still, in our modern world, to check the egoism of men, and to teach them the virtues of a common life; when one considers, further, how inevitably race differences arise out of the Providential order of life, one cannot but think that, in this matter, Mazzini is the truer prophet. That mankind has often abused the Idea of the Family should lead us not to disintegrate that most fundamental of social groups, but rather to moralize it, and in the same way, therefore, the fact that Nationality is vul-

garized and corrupted, should not lead us to denounce but to spiritualize it. In the light of a great Social Religion, such as has been desiderated above, Nationality would be thus spiritualized by the idea of National Vocation in the Kingdom of God. Just as the individual may rise above his egoisms into the idea of life as a service of the Common Good, so the historically and geographically determined aggregate of individuals which we call a nation may conceivably rise above its greed and lust of dominion by living to realize its vocation in the Divine Counsel.

What force and tenacity and grandeur such an ideal may give to a people let the Old Testament bear witness. Nationality, up to a certain point, corresponds to Individuality, and just as the true ideal of a nation is not that of a bundle of similar units, but that of a harmony of richly varied individualities, so in the great world order of the future there must be room for many different national types harmonized by a common spirit and aim. That will be true of it which is said of the Holy City of the Apocalypse. "The nations shall walk amidst the light thereof . . . and they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it." Its unity, in short, will be that not of the mass, but of the organism.

We apply this principle already in our historical judgments of dead nations. We appraise the

Assyrian, the Egyptian, the Phoenician, the Greek, the Roman, and the Hebrew, by their respective contributions to the common life of mankind. "Die Welt Geschichte ist das Welt-Gericht." Why should we not anticipate the verdict of the future by applying to our present world, which will one day be a dead, silent, remote past, the same great principles of judgment which posterity will use, and thereby acquire the habits of tolerance and sympathy and hatred of national aggression which they involve? Why, in a word, should we not endeavour to look at the whole question of nationality and patriotism in the light of the Kingdom of God?

(2) There remains to be considered the other great contributing cause of the international evils of the present day, the absence of any adequate institutions for the realizing of the common good of Christendom.

The international world is to-day at a stage of evolution corresponding in many respects to the state of the individual nations of Christendom at the close of the feudal system. So far as international organization goes it is thus some six hundred years behind the nation. National society at that time, in many countries, was in a condition which seems to us little better than a modified anarchy. The rising industry had to struggle against plunder and private war; justice

was not a national concern, but a matter of baronial privilege, or private vendetta ; the right of the strongest tempered by a certain diffused sentiment of Christianity prevailed. We know how this semi-anarchic condition of national society was brought to an end. It was terminated by the rise of strong central powers, the gradual consolidation of the great national groups round these centres, and the establishment of national institutions for the administration of justice. Gradually there arose above the strife of classes the authority of great tribunals, which rendered the rude justice of former days obsolete, so that thenceforth all social struggles were carried on subject to the rule of national law.

There is much that is analogous to this semi-anarchic state of the dying feudalism in the Christendom of our day, and that is what makes its militarism at once so fatally necessary and so grossly anachronistic. The code of morals, and even of manners, as between nations, is such as no modern civilized society would tolerate as between its citizens. If we are to take the popular press of Europe and America as fair indicators of international feeling, the eight great Powers of Christendom treat one another like ruffians in an East End slum or a mining camp rather than like Christians or even gentlemen. They swagger and boast, they glory in one another's disasters, and

are full of the meanest envy and detraction when any one of them is successful. They threaten and bully unblushingly, all their effusive international courtesies are always with a view to some personal gain, and ever in the backgound there lies the appeal to the revolver or the knife.

Yet there is within the nations a fair amount of courtesy, honour, and magnanimity, and often the very men who approve of such an attitude towards rival nationalities would detest the appearing of such a temper among their own people. One main reason of this absurd and abominable anachronism, this survival of a coarser and meaner life in international relations than exists within the nations, is the absence of any such international polity as has enabled individuals to win in peaceful common life a measure of sympathy and mutual understanding. Had the inner life of the nations remained at the anarchic stage of raid and vendetta, the inner relations of their citizens would have remained at a corresponding stage of brutality and falsehood. But it has been found possible to frame *concordats* of justice and law which secure the same ends as were aimed at by the blood feud, and a better life for all than was possible under the truculent self-assertion of earlier days has been thereby attained. The higher life of the nations has thus found expression in institutions, and under the shelter of

public tribunals and legislatures representative of varying interests a nobler common life has arisen. Is it wholly visionary to hope for anything corresponding to this in the world of international relations? Is there no prospect of any system of international justice? That is the great problem through which the most advanced minds among our statesmen and publicists are groping their way, just as we have seen that missionaries are becoming sociologists, and social reformers at home are endeavouring to build up a nobler social structure.

There is one great practical difference between the national and the international evolution. The old evil system of vendetta and *Faustrecht* was put down within the nation by irresistible physical force. It was the absolute monarch with his standing army who crushed out the social anarchy and consolidated a system of authoritative justice. Now in the very nature of the case we cannot look for the rise of any such absolute central power in the Christendom either of to-day or of to-morrow. There is no conceivable physical force behind any international tribunal which we can imagine. It would seem that if there is ever to be in Christendom any better system than the present brutal and anachronistic order it must rest not on physical but on spiritual power.

But here, also, the pressure of economic forces

has brought the principle of an international tribunal to the front. The crushing burdens of militarism, the miseries of the proletariat, and the rise of the Anarchism and Nihilism which spring from these miseries, have forced the great Powers much against their will to institute the Hague tribunal. Plainly, the whole weight of the spiritual influence of the Church should be cast into the scales in its interest. It is at least a step towards a better world polity, and, as we have seen, it is the realizing of such a polity that the whole drift of later theological movement tends to bring more and more before men.

But even if such a tribunal became a great and powerful factor in human history, even if it more than realized all that its most ardent advocates claim for it, it would not of itself solve in the Christian sense the international problem of Christendom, any more than the mere existence of civic tribunals within the nations has solved their burning social questions. It would minimize the worst dangers of international greed and vanity, and it would thus be a true institutional expression of the Christian spirit, but it would only be one step towards the ideal of a world associated for common aims, a world in which each nation would bring the riches of its national individuality into the great treasure house of the Common Good. Such an ideal seems visionary

indeed to the great majority of our writers on public themes. It is simply not as yet above the horizon. Arbitration is the utmost that most of them dare to hope for, and the vision of an associated humanity is simply one of those

"Huge, cloudy symbols of a high romance"

which have no substantial ground in reality. It has not even the substantiality of a dream. It is rather of the tenuity of a dream within a dream.

Such pessimism is largely due to loss of faith. In the ebb-tide of religious conviction of our day men have largely lost the power of reading the true meaning of history. They can neither measure the past nor forecast the future who believe that Religion is a spent force in the life of mankind, or who assume that God has wrought His greatest deeds in the past of human history. What if there should come into human life as the centuries and millenniums pass, a vast new influx of Divine Power which should invest the Idea of the Common Good with new sacredness and grandeur, and turn all the scattered forces of the religious life of men into the endeavour to realize the Supreme Divine End, the world-wide Kingdom of God,

"A common wave of thought and joy, lifting mankind again"?

We need not endeavour to minimize the possible remoteness and difficulty of the event. So far as

we can judge of the situation, it is far less advanced within the world-commonwealth than within the nation. The political and economic development is, as we have seen, at a less advanced stage. Moreover, the religious situation is, as we should have expected, less mature. A large part of Christendom still holds the Christian faith in forms under which its full energies cannot be liberated, or in forms in which its power is dissipated through analytic unbelief. Taking Christendom as a whole, therefore, the religious synthesis is as immature as the economic and political development. He would be over bold who should venture to predict in detail the economic and political evolution of the Latin and Slavonic peoples, or to forecast the theological development of the Eastern and Roman Churches. But the causes which have produced the theological development in Western Europe and America are at work also in Eastern and Southern Europe. The light of Science, Modern Philosophy and Historical Criticism cannot permanently be shut out by a faith that wishes to command the progressive life of its day, and it is the argument of these pages that those stars in their courses are fighting for the Kingdom of God.

We shall now sum up the main conclusions of the whole foregoing argument. We have seen

that by the steady operation of great political and economic forces, the vanguard peoples of civilization have moved onwards into a position of singular interest and peril.

We have seen that the lower and the higher races have been brought together in a relation of great and increasing intimacy of economic and political life, and that this new relation has in it great possibilities alike of good and evil.

We have seen that within the sphere of the nation, Western Christendom is on the eve of great economic transformations or of prolonged social strife, in both of which lie possibilities of the most sinister kind for civilization.

We have seen finally that the international relations of Christendom are of such a nature that at any moment the whole fabric of civilization may be subject to the shock of war on a more gigantic scale than the world has ever seen, and that the fear of this acts as an incubus on the evolution of its higher life.

In all these cases I have tried to show that the root of the total danger lies in the selfishness and materialism of the individual, and that the only hope of society lies in the intervention of some power strong enough to transform private interest by taking it up into the idea of a common good. The destruction of private interest is neither possible nor desirable. What is wanted is some-

thing which will show convincingly to the individual that there can never be any real contradiction between his true good and the true and lasting good of his fellow-men. The rise of the sense of the Common Good is the great need of the democratic civilization of the present day.

It has been further shown that we can look for this vitally necessary service only from Religion, which has always been a nation-making and nation-saving power of the first magnitude. But Religion, historically regarded, has taken several forms.

(1) It has taken sometimes an intensely national type, as in the nations of classical antiquity, or, as in a nobler form, in the religion of Israel, or, as in a higher form still, in the Hebrew Christian nationalism of Modern Puritanism.

Plainly such a form is inadequate to the needs of the present day. We may combine the utmost reverence for our Puritan forefathers, with profound gratitude to God that the course of religious thought has carried us beyond the theocratic national ideals of the heroic age of Puritanism. Such ideals would, no doubt, have served us well in solving the problems presented by the social and intellectual life of our time, but they would have been inadequate to those presented by the new relation of the higher to the lower races, or by the international danger of Christendom.

Puritanism in its distinctive idea was neither a missionary religion nor a religion which made for universal peace. It was a baptized Hebraism willing to make proselytes, but reserving its main energies for other tasks, and nationalist rather than cosmopolitan in its immediate practical aim.[1] Its main interest lay in the nationalist theocracy, in the covenanted people of God, in the purity of their discipline, their conformity to the scriptural model and the clearness of their testimony. No doubt the greater minds and natures of Puritanism ranged higher and deeper, but I think that, broadly regarded, the case is as I have stated it. Grand, therefore, as is the Puritan tradition, we may well be thankful that in the Providence of God we have forms of Christian truth more adequate to the riches of the great world of modern life than these.

(2) Religion, again, has sometimes taken an exaggeratedly individualist form.

On this view man's central interest lies in the salvation and culture of his own soul, and all other interests are subsidiary and incidental. Possessed by the great conviction that God and the soul are the only two enduring realities, but interpreting both in too narrow a sense, the early

[1] For the teaching of Scottish Puritanism on this point see Dr. Walker's *Scottish Theology and Theologians*, Cunningham Lectures, 1871.

anchorites, the mystics of the Middle Ages and the pietists of modern days have found their chief good in the culture of their private and devotional life, and have practically left the great world to go its own road and disclaimed any responsibility for its wanderings.

That the world, none the less, owes much to these mystics and pietists, as it does to the Puritans, all competent judges know. If they have the narrowness of the specialist they have also his greater depth, and the writings of the recluse have thus often been a spring of living waters to the militant reformer, or soldier, or statesman bearing the burden and heat of the day. Luther has told us what he owed to the *Theologica Germanica*, and the *Imitation of Christ* was Gordon's solace in the long tragedy of Khartoum.

Yet that this individualistic religion, taken alone, is not sufficient for Society in its present strait and agony seems to me equally certain. We must advance from it to the full riches of the New Testament idea, that while the springs of the New Testament life are "hidden with Christ in God," that life can only come to its true self when, in the comradeship of the Christian Church, it fights and endures for the world-wide Kingdom. What the world needs to-day is a religion which wins in its solitary hours of devotion the power to realize itself in the market, and

the senate, and the embassy, and the home and foreign mission field. It needs men who, inspired by a religious motive, will grapple with civic corruption and national greed and vanity, and be willing to face danger not only to body, but to soul, in the interest of the Kingdom of God.

(3) Once more, religion has often taken a predominantly ecclesiastical form.

The main interest of the Christian believer of this type lies not in the Theocratic nation, nor in the individual Soul, but in the Church. The visible Church, it is believed, is the real centre of God's interest in the world, the one permanent and unchanging reality in the changing world of time. All else on earth is but so much scaffolding for the true building. The Family, the State, the great structure of Civilization itself, all exist for the Church. In the interests of the visible Church, Bossuet argued, God governs the world, and in this he was but following the Roman Catholic tradition which directed the policy of the Popes of the Middle Ages.

Now that there was truth in this view, as there is truth in the Puritan and Pietist views, I should be far from denying, but that it is a view in any way adequate either to the Christian revelation, or to the needs of the time I do not believe. What is needed to-day is a form of religion which will invest the common secular duties of life with

sacredness and grandeur, which will bring the mighty sanctions of Eternity to bear upon modern industry and the home and foreign policy of nations, which will compel men to feel that human society itself is a sacred thing, that it is not the scaffolding, but the living rock, out of which God is Himself building His city. A religion of this type, I believe, you cannot get if you make the visible Church the final end of creation ; a religion of this type you do get if you make the Church, like the Family and the State, a means to the world-wide realization of the Kingdom of God.

It is only a religion of this stamp that can deliver the world out of the present *impasse*, and, as I believe, it is precisely a religion of this kind that is emerging from the long analysis of the nineteenth century. If the argument of the earlier part of this study is sound, it is just this social aspect of the Christian Idea that the modern epoch of investigation has brought to light in the Christian Gospel. What we are witnessing in the religious world, therefore, is not the destruction of the work of the Reformation, but its completion, just as what we are witnessing in the economic and political world is the completion of the work accomplished in the same age.

There is something singularly impressive in the spectacle which the recent history of religious thought presents when viewed from this stand-

point, something which awakens in the mind the sense of religious awe. The historians of early Christianity have been accustomed to begin their work by showing us the convergence of all the great movements of the secular life of the age on the place and the time when the Son of God appeared among men. They have shown us in the far past the Greek races elaborating their wonderful language, and building up the fabric of their philosophy, all unwitting of the grander uses to which their endeavours should be put. They have shown us the Samnite shepherds and the outlaws of the Seven Hills labouring in the dim dawn of Roman civilization, and the great statesmen and warriors of later days building up the gigantic polity of their world-wide empire, driving their roads over desert and mountain, forging their iron legions, devising their mighty code, each following his own ambition or obscure consciousness of right, and all in the grasp of a stronger Hand and in the sweep of a larger Purpose than they knew. They have shown us the third great Race toilfully making its way through infinite tempest and tragic eclipse, through epochs of prophetic inspiration and desert tracts of legalism to the amazing climax. The spectacle of the three great peoples of Hellas, Rome and Israel wending their way to the common centre of world-history and world-redemption, awakens in the mind a sense of

awe, as if here the broad, obscure page of history suddenly became luminous with Divine meaning. But surely if God has so acted once in history, He has done it again and again, whenever any great and momentous crisis in the progress of that same Gospel has drawn near. The *Praeparatio Evangelica* is no solitary incident in the earth's history; it is a standing principle of the Divine Government of the world.

The same great Power controls the courses of the world's higher thought as rules the secular life of men. The Divine Providence and the Divine Grace labour together in the life of the nations as all Christians know that they labour together for the progress of the individual soul. Read with this clue the whole troubled intellectual and social life of the past century becomes instinct with meaning. We see each labourer and thinker, little as he may at the time have realized it, taking his place in the march of the same great purpose. "Galileo in his turret" and Newton in his garden, Kant and Niebuhr, Strauss the iconoclast and Neander the saint and scholar, the pioneer in tropical forests, the explorer breaking into far-off silent seas and bringing strange new lands within the reach of Civilization and the Christian Gospel, the revolutionary leader on the shattered barricade, the excavator driving his trenches through the green Euphrates mounds,

the statesman, the diplomatist and the soldier, consciously or unconsciously, they are all in the grasp of the same great Purpose to-day which marshalled the vanguard of the world's life nineteen centuries ago.

The task before the Christian Church is one of amazing extent and grandeur, but, hard as is the task and remote as may be the issue, who can contemplate such a drama of Providence without feeling that "all things are possible to him that believeth"? The task before the Church is just the old task which is described with simple grandeur by the New Testament as the "overcoming of the world." "And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Butler and Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, Frome, and London

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